Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam

PART 1—SKANDHAS 1-5



Translated by Svāmī Vijñāṇananda 1922

Edited by Ādyaśakti Svāmī 2019

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Preface

What the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is to the Vaiṣṇavas, the *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam* is to the Śāktas. The *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, also known as *Devi Purāṇa*, was composed in 12 Skandhas containing eighteen thousand verses by the great Vedavyāsa. The question of the priority of the two *Bhāgavatams* has been often discussed—unfortunately, more in the spirit of partisans rather than that of sober scholars.

Though classified as an *upa-purāṇa* it is the only *Purāṇa* Vedavyāsa called *Mahā-Purāṇa,* meaning the great *Purāṇa*. At the end of each chapter of the 18 main *Purāṇas* or the other *upa-purāṇas* is the verse "This is the end of the fifth section of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*," or "Thus ends the first chapter of *Gaṇeśa Purāṇa Upasanakhanda* called 'The Description of Somakanta'." Whereas in the *Devī Bhāgavatam* it is clearly: "Thus ends the eighth chapter of the first Skandha in the *Mahā-Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam* of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa." This choice of words by the great *ṛṣi* obviously indicates its importance, as the Divine Mother is described in all major *śāstras* as the One Supreme beyond and above the trinities and all Gods.

Dedication

This translation has been inscribed to the sacred memory of my friend the late Rāi Bāhādur Śrī Chandra Vidyārnava who induced me to undertake the translation of this work. He had thoroughly read the two *Bhāgavatas,* and it was his opinion that the priority of composition belonged to the *Devī Bhāgavatam*. The other *Bhāgavatam*, according to him, is a modern compilation attributed to Bopadeva (Vopadeva), the author of *Mugdhabodha Vyākaranam*. — Svāmī Vijñāṇānanda, 1922

To my dear Śākta-guru, Jñāṇa-Śakti Svāmī, and all the other *gurus* and teachers who encouraged me on my path. — Ādyaśakti Svāmī

Editor's Note

This edition is a gloss edit focused on readability. I brought the text up to IAST standard, correcting Sanskrit spellings as far as possible. The IAST letters are listed with their Devanāgarī equivalents and phonetic values in IPA, valid for Sanskrit, Hindi and other modern languages that use Devanāgarī script:

Vowels and codas

Devanāgarī	Roman Transliteration	Category
अ	*a*	monophthongs and syllabic liquids
आ	*ā*	
इ	*i*	
ई	*ī*	
उ	*u*	
ऊ	*ū*	
ऋ	*ṛ*	
ॠ	*ṝ*	
ऌ	*ḷ*	
ॡ	*ḹ*	
ए	*e*	diphthongs
ऐ	*ai*	
ओ	*o*	
औ	*au*	
◌ं	*ṃ*	*anusvara*
◌ः	*ḥ*	*visarga*
◌ँ	(none)	*candrabindu*

ऽ		*avagraha*

Consonants

velars	palatals	retroflexes	dentals	labials	Category
क k K	च c C	ट ṭ Ṭ	त t T	प p P	tenuis stops
ख kh Kh	छ ch Ch	ठ ṭh Ṭh	थ th Th	फ ph Ph	aspirated stops
ग g G	ज j J	ड ḍ Ḍ	द d D	ब b B	voiced stops
घ gh Gh	झ jh Jh	ढ ḍh Ḍh	ध dh Dh	भ bh Bh	breathy-voiced stops
ङ ṅ Ṅ	ञ ñ Ñ	ण ṇ Ṇ	न n N	म m M	nasal stops
ह h H	य y Y	र r R	ल l L	व v V	approximants
	श ś Ś	ष ṣ Ṣ	स s S		sibilants

Long vowels are marked with a macron (overline); vocalic (syllabic) consonants and retroflexes have an underdot.

Notice of Attribution

First Skandha

Chapter I—Questions by Śaunaka and Others

1. I meditate on the beginningless Brahmavidyā who is *sarva-caitanya-rūpā*, of the nature of all-consciousness; may She stimulate our *buddhi* to the realization of That—Brahman as described in the *Upaniṣads*.

2. Śaunaka said: "O highly fortunate Sūta! O noble Sūta! You are the best of persons; you are blessed, inasmuch as you have thoroughly studied all the auspicious *Purāṇas*.

3. O sinless one! you have gone through all the eighteen *Purāṇas* composed by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana; they are full of esoteric meanings. The *Purāṇas* are endowed with five characteristics: history; cosmology, with metaphorical illustrations of philosophical principles; secondary creation; genealogy of kings; and of *manvantaras* or the period of a Manu's rule, consisting of 71 *divya-yugas* or 306,720,000 terrestrial years.

4-5. O sinless one! It is not that you have read the *Purāṇas* like a parrot, but you have thoroughly grasped the meaning of them all, as you have learnt them from Vyāsa himself, the son of Satyavatī. Now it is our good merits that you have come at this divine holy excellent *viśvasan-kṣetra* (place), free from any defects of Kaliyuga.

6-10. O Sūta! The Munis assembled here desire to hear the holy *Purāṇa Saṁhitā* that yields religious merits. So describe this to us with concentrated mind. O all-knowing Sūta! Live long and be free from the threefold sorrows of existence. O highly fortunate one! Narrate to us the *Purāṇa* equivalent to the *Vedas*. O Sūta! Those persons that do not hear the *Purāṇas* are certainly deprived by the Creator—though they apparently have the organ of hearing, with the power of tasting the sweet essence of words. Because the organ of hearing is gratified only when it hears the words of the wise men,

just as the organ of taste is satisfied only when it tastes the six kinds of tastes: (sweet, sour, pungent, bitter, salty, and astringent). This is known to all. The serpents are void of the organ of hearing yet are enchanted by sweet music; then why shouldn't those persons that have the organs of hearing but are averse to hear the *Purāṇas* be thrown under the category of the deaf?

11-18. O Saumya, of gentle appearance! Hence all these Brahmāṇas, being distressed with the fear of this Kaliyuga, have come here to Naimiṣāraṇya, eager to hear the *Purāṇas* attentively, and are staying here with this one object. Time must be spent somehow or other; fools while away their time in sports and other evil practices, and the learned pass away their time in meditating on the *śāstras;* but these *śāstras* are too vast and very varied; they contain *jalpas* (debates or wrangling discussions to win over the opposite party), *vādas* (sound doctrines to arrive at just conclusions), and various *arthavādas* (explanations and assertions, recommending *vidhis* or precepts by stating the good arising from its proper observance and evils arising from its omission, and also by adducing historical instances for its support, praises and eulogies) and filled with argumentation.

And amongst these *śāstras* again, the *Vedānta* is *sāttvik*, the *Mīmāṁsās* are the *rājasik* and the *Nyāya-śāstras* and *Hetuvādas* are the *tāmasik;* so the *śāstras* are varied. Similarly, the *Purāṇas* are of three kinds: *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. O Saumya! you have recited those *Purāṇas* endowed with five characteristics and full of many narratives; of these, the fifth *Purāṇa*, equivalent to the *Vedas* and with all good qualities, the *Devī-Bhāgavata* yields *dharma* and *kāma* (religion and desires), gives liberation to those who desire emancipation and is very wonderful; you mentioned this before but only in passing; you did not dwell on this specially. Now these Brahmāṇas are eager to hear gladly this divine auspicious *Devī-Bhāgavata*, the best of the *Purāṇas;* so kindly describe this in detail.

19-25. O knower of *dharma!* By your faith and devotion to your *guru*, you have become *sāttvik* and thus have thoroughly known the *Purāṇa Saṁhitās*

spoken by Vedavyāsa. O Omniscient one! Therefore we have heard many *Purāṇas* from your mouth; but we are not satisfied, as the Devas are not satisfied with the drinking of the nectar. O Sūta! Fie to the nectar, even as drinking nectar is quite useless in giving *mukti*. But hearing the *Bhāgavata* gives instantaneous *mukti* from this *saṁsāra* the terrible round of birth and death. O Sūta! we performed thousands and thousands of *yajñas* for drinking the nectar (*amṛta*), but never we got the full peace. The reason being that *yajñas* lead to heaven only; on the expiry of the period of *puñyā* (good merits), the heavenly life ceases and one is expelled from the Heavens. Thus incessant sojourns in this wheel of *saṁsāra*, the constant round of births and deaths never ends. O Knower of everything! Thus, without *jñāṇa* (Self-realization) *mukti* never comes to men, wandering in this wheel of Time (*kālacakra*) composed of the three *guṇas*. So describe this holy *Bhāgavata*, always beloved of the *mumukṣās* (those that desire *mukti*), this secret work yielding liberation, holy and full of all transcendental sentiments (*rasas*).

Thus ends the first chapter of the first Skandha on the questioning about the Purāṇa by Śaunaka and other Ṛṣis, in the Mahāpurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Śrī Sūta's Response

1-5. Śrī Sūta replied: "I am highly fortunate; I consider myself blessed and I am purified by the Mahātmās—high-souled persons—inasmuch as I am questioned by them about the highly meritorious *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, famous in the *Vedas*. I will now speak in detail about this *Purāṇa*, the best of the *āgamas*, approved of by all the *Vedas* and the most secret of all the *śāstras*.

O Brāhmaṇas! I bow down to the gentle lotus feet, known throughout the three *lokas*, of the Devī Bhagavatī, praised by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa and the other *devas*, meditated upon always by the *munīndras*, and which the *yogīs* contemplate as their source of liberation. Today I will devotedly

describe, in detail and in plain language, that *Purāṇa* which is the best of all the *Purāṇas*, which gives prosperity and contains all the sentiments (*rasas*) that a human being can conceive: the *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*.

May that Highest Primal Śakti who is known as Vidyā in the *Vedas;* who is omniscient, who controls the innermost being of all and who is skilled in cutting off the knot of the world, who cannot be realized by the wicked and the vicious, but who is visible to the *munis* in their meditation, may that Bhagavatī Devī give me always the *buddhi* fit to describe this, Her *Purāṇa!*

I call to my mind the Mother of all the worlds who creates this universe, whose nature is both real from the relative point of view, and unreal from the Absolute point of view, Who creates, preserves and destroys by Her *rājasik, sāttvik* and *tāmasik* qualities respectively, and in the end resolves all these into Herself and plays alone in the period of Dissolution—at this time, I remember that Mother of all the worlds.

6-10. It is commonly thought that Brahmā is the creator of this universe; and the knowers of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* say so; but they also say that Brahmā is born of the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu. Thus it appears that Brahmā cannot create independently. Again Viṣṇu, from whose navel-lotus Brahmā is born, lies in *yoga-nidrā* on the bed of Ananta, the thousand-headed serpent, in the time of *pralaya;* so how can we call Bhagavān Viṣṇu, who rests on the thousand-headed serpent Ananta, as the creator of the universe? Again the refuge of Ananta is the water of the ocean *ekārṇava;* a liquid cannot rest without a vessel; so I take refuge of the Mother of all beings, who resides as the *śakti* of all and thus is the supporter of all; I fly for refuge unto that Devī who was praised by Brahmā while resting on the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu who was lying fast asleep in *yoga-nidrā*. O Munis! meditating on that Māyā-devī who creates, preserves and destroys the universe, who is known as th source of the three *guṇas* and who grants *mukti,* I now describe the whole of Her *Purāṇa;* now you all should hear.

11-16. The *Purāṇa Śrīmad Bhāgavat* (also known as *Devī-Bhāgavata*) is excellent and holy; eighteen thousand pure *ślokas* are contained in it.

Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana has divided this *Purāṇa* into twelve auspicious Skandhas (Books or Cantos) and three-hundred-eighteen chapters. Twenty chapters compose the first Skandha; twelve chapters in the second Skandha; thirty chapters in the the third Skandha; twenty-five chapters in the fourth Skandha, thirty-five, in the fifth; thirty-one, in the sixth; forty, in the seventh; twenty-four, in the eighth; fifty chapters in the ninth; thirteen, in the tenth; twenty-four in the eleventh, and fourteen chapters are contained in the twelfth Skandha, O Munis! Thus the Dvaipāyana Muni has arranged his chapters in each Skandha.

17-20. That work is denominated as a *Purāṇa* which contains the following five characteristics: Creation of the universe, Secondary creation, Dynasties, Manvantaras and the description of Manus and other kings. O best of Munis! all the *Purāṇas* are endowed with these five characteristics. These five characteristics of the *Purāṇas* are also contained in the *Devī Bhāgavatam*.

Śivā is beyond *prākṛtik* attributes, eternal and ever omnipresent; She is without any change, immutable, unattainable but by *yoga;* She is the refuge of the universe and Her nature is *turīya-caitanya*. Mahā-Lakṣmī is Her *sāttvikī-śakti;* Sarasvatī is Her *rājasikī-śakti* and Mahā-Kālī is Her *tāmasikī-śakti;* these are all feminine forms.

21-25. The assuming of bodies by these three *śaktis* for the creation of this universe is denominated as *sarga* (creation) by the Mahāpuruṣas (high-souled persons) skilled in *śastras*. And the further resolution of these three *śaktis* into Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa for the creation, preservation, and destruction of this universe is denominated in this *Purāṇa* as *pratisarga* (secondary creation.) The description of the kings of the solar and lunar dynasties and the families of Hiraṇyakaśipu and others is known as the description of the lineages of kings and their dynasties. The description of Svāyambhūva and other Manus and their ruling periods is known as Manvantaras. And the description of their descendants is known as the description of their dynasties. Thus these are the five characteristics in the *Purāṇas* as contained in the *Devī Bhāgavatam*.

26-32. So also is *Mahābhārata* by Vedavyāsa characterised by these five things. This *Mahābhārata* is known as the fifth *Veda* and *Itihāsa* (history.) In this are something more than one *lakh ślokas*."

Śaunaka said: "O Sūta! What are those *Purāṇas* and how many verses are contained in each? Speak all those in detail in this holy *kṣetra;* we, the residents of Naimiṣāraṇya are all very eager to hear this. Now hear why we call ourselves the residents of Naimiṣāraṇya; you will realize then that no other place exists in this Kali age for hearing the holy discourses on religion.

When we were afraid of the Kali age, Brahmā gave us a *manomaya-cakra* (mental wheel) and said to all of us: 'Follow this wheel, go after it and the spot where the felly (rim) of the wheel will become thin so as to break and will not roll further, that country is the holy place; Kali will never be able to enter there; you all better remain there until the Satya age comes back.' On hearing the words of Brahmā, we went out quickly keeping the wheel before us, our object being to determine which place is best and holiest. When we came here, the felly of the wheel become thin and shorn before my eyes; hence this *kṣetra* is called Naimiṣ; it is the most sanctifying place. Thus, acording to the instruction of Brahmā, we have got orders to stay here.

Kali cannot enter here; hence the Māhātmas, Munis and Siddhas, terrified by the Kali age, have followed me and resorted to this place. We have performed *yajñas* with *purodāsa* (clarified butter as is offered in oblations to fire) where no animals are sacrificed; now we have no other important work to do except to pass our time here until the arrival of Satyayuga. O Sūta! we are extremely fortunate in all respects that you have come here; purify us today by narrating to us the names of the *Purāṇas* equivalent to the *Vedas*. O Sūta! you are also a learned orator; we, too, are ardent listeners, with no other works to bother our heads; narrate to us today the auspicious holy *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. O Sūta! Long live you; and may no ailiments—internal, external, or from the Devas—torment you. This is our

blessing to you. We have heard that in the most sanctifying *Purāṇa*, narrated by Maharṣi Dvaipāyana, all about *dharma* (religion), *artha* (wealth) and *kāma* (desires) are duly described, as well acquiring *tattva-jñāṇa* and liberation are also spoken of. O Sūta! our desires are not satisfied the more we hear of those beautiful holy words. Now describe to us the highly pure *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam* wherein are described all the *līlās* (the dramatic acts) of the Mother of the three worlds, purifying all sins and adorned with all spiritual qualities, are described as yielding all desires like a *kalpavṛkṣa,* the celestial tree."

Thus ends the second chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the Purāṇa (the text) in Mahā-Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—Praising the *Purāṇas*

1-11. Sūta said: "O best of the Munis! I am now telling you the names of the *Purāṇas*, etc., exactly as I have heard from Vedavyāsa, the son of Satyavatī; listen.

The *Purāṇas* beginning with *ma* are two in number; those beginning with *bha* are two; those beginning with *bra* are three; those beginning with *va* are four; those beginning respectively with *a, na, pa, liṅ, ga, kū* and *ska* are one each. *Ma* means *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa; bha* signifies *Bhaviṣya* and *Bhāgavat Purāṇas; bra* signifies *Brahmā, Brahmāṇḍa* and *Brahmāvaivarta Purāṇas; va* signifies *Vāman, Vāyu, Viṣṇu* and *Varāha Purāṇas; a* signifies *Agṇi Purāṇa; na* signifies *Nārada Purāṇa; pa* signifies *Padma Purāṇa; liṅ* signifies *Liṅga Purāṇam; ga* signifies *Garuḍa Purāṇam; kū* signifies *Kūrma Purāṇa* and *ska* signifies *Skanda Purāṇam*. These are the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

O Śaunaka! In the *Matsya Purāṇa* there are fourteen thousand *ślokas;* in the wonderfully varied *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇam* there are nine thousand *ślokas*. In the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* fourteen thousand five hundred *ślokas* are counted by

the Munis, the seers of truth. In the holy *Bhāgavata* there are eighteen thousand *ślokas;* in the *Brahmā Purāṇa* there are *ajuta* (ten thousand) *ślokas*. In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* there are twelve thousand one hundred *ślokas;* in the *Brahmā Vaivarta Purāṇam* there are eighteen thousand *ślokas*. In the *Vaman Purāṇa* there are *ajuta* (ten thousand) *ślokas;* in the *Vāyu Purāṇam* there are twenty-four thousand six hundred *ślokas;* in the greatly wonderful *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* there are twenty-three thousand *ślokas;* in the Varāha *Purāṇa* there are twenty-four thousand *ślokas*; in the *Agṇi Purāṇam* there are sixteen thousand *ślokas;* in the *Bṛhat Narada Purāṇam* there are twenty-five thousand *ślokas*, in the big *Padma Purāṇa* there are fifty-five thousand *ślokas;* in the voluminous *Liṅga Purāṇa* eleven thousand *ślokas* exist; in the *Garuḍa Purāṇam* spoken by Hari nineteen thousand *ślokas* exist; in the *Kūrma Purāṇa*, seventeen thousand *ślokas* exist and in the greatly wonderful *Skanda Purāṇa* there are eighty-one thousand *ślokas*.

First Letter	Name	Number of *ślokas*
ma	*Matsya Purāṇa*	14,000
	Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa	9,000
bha	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*	14,500
	Bhāgavat Purāṇa	18,000
bra	*Brahmā Purāṇa*	10,000
	Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa	12,100
	Brahmāvaivarta Purāṇa	18,000
va	*Vāmana Purāṇa*	10,000
	Vāyu Purāṇa	24,600
	Viṣṇu Purāṇa	23,000
	Varāha Purāṇa	24,000
a	*Agṇi Purāṇa*	16,000

First Letter	Name	Number of *śłokas*
na	*Nārada Purāṇa*	25,000
pa	*Padma Purāṇa*	55,000
liṅ	*Liṅga Purāṇa*	11,000
ga	*Garuḍa Purāṇam*	19,000
kū	*Kūrma Purāṇa*	17,000
ska	*Skanda Purāṇa*	81,000

O sinless Ṛṣis! thus I have described to you the names of all the *Purāṇas* and the number of verses contained in them. Now hear about the *Upa-purāṇas*.

12-17. The first are the *Upa-purāṇas* narrated by Sanat Kumāra: *Sanat Kumāra Purāṇa, Narasiṁha Purāṇa, Naradīya Purāṇa* and *Śiva Purāṇa;* Then the *Purāṇas* narrated by Durvāsa: *Kapila Purāṇa, Manava Purāṇa, Auśanasa Purāṇa, Varuṇa Purāṇa. Kalika Purāṇa, Samva Purāṇa, Nandi Keśvara Purāṇa* and *Saura Purāṇa; Purāṇas* spoken by Parāśara: *Āditya Purāṇa, Maheśvara Purāṇa, Bhāgavata* and *Vasiṣṭha Purāṇa*. These *Upa-purāṇas* are described by the Māhātmas. After compiling the eighteen *Purāṇas*, Vedavyāsa the son of Satyavatī composed *Mahābhārata*, that has no rival, out of these *Purāṇas*.

18-24. At every Manvantara, in each Dvāpara-yuga, Vedavyāsa duly expounds the *Purāṇas* to preserve the religion. Vedavyāsa is no other person than Viṣṇu Himself; He, in the form of Vedavyāsa, divides the one *Veda* into four parts in every Dvāpara Yuga, for the good of the world. The Brahmāṇas of the Kali age are shortlived and their intellect (*buddhi*) is not sharp; they cannot realize the meaning after studying the *Vedas.* Knowing this, in every Dvāpara Yuga Bhagavān expounds the holy *Purāṇa Saṁhitās*. The more so because women, *śudras*, and the lower *dvijas* are not entitled to hear the *Vedas;* for their good, the *Purāṇas* have been composed. The present auspicious Manvantara is Vaivasvata; it is the seventh in due order;

and the son of Satyavatī, the best of the knowers of *dharma*, is the Vedavyāsa of the 28th Dvāpara Yuga of this seventh Manvantara. He is my *guru;* in the next Dvāpara, Yuga Asvatthama, the son of Droṇa will be the Vedavyāsa. Twenty-seven Vedavyāsas had expired and they duly compiled each their own *Purāṇa Saṁhitās* in their own Dvāpara Yugas.

Now I shall narrate the way in which I came to hear this most excellent *Purāṇa.* While being questioned by his very intelligent son Śukadeva, not born in the usual way from womb, Dvaipāyana expounded all the excellent confidential meanings of this *Purāṇa,* and thereby I also came to know them also. O saintly persons! Thus Śukadeva, sincerely earnest to cross this endless bottomless ocean of *saṁsāra*, tasted of the wonderful traits of the *Veda:* the *kalpa* tree, this *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* with its numerous stories and anecdotes, with great eagerness and intense pleasure.

38-43. Oh! Who is there in this world, after he has heard this *Bhāgavata,* who is not freed from this terror of Kali. Even if the greatest sinner, void of the right ways of living and *ācāra* as ordained in the *Vedas*, hears on any pretense this excellent *Devī Bhāgavata*, the chief of the *Purāṇas*, he enjoys all the great enjoyments of this world and in the end attains the eternal place occupied by the *yogīs*. She who, in Her *nirguṇa* aspect, is rare to even Hari and Hara, who is very dear as *tattva-vidyā* to the *jñāṇīs,* She whose real nature can be realized only in *samādhi*, resides always in the cavity of the heart of the hearers of this *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. He who, getting the all-qualified human birth and meeting the reciter of this *Purāṇa*, the boat to cross the terrifying ocean of this world, does not hear this blissful *Purāṇa*, is certainly deprived by the Creator. How is it that the wayward dull-headed persons with their vicious ears, can hear always the faults and calumnies of others—which are entirely useless—but cannot hear this pure *Purāṇa* that grants the four *vargas—dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa?"*

Thus ends the third chapter of the first Skandha on praising the Purāṇas in Mahā-Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—the Excellence of the Devī

1-3. The Ṛṣis said: "O Saumya! How was Śukadeva, who studied these *Purāṇa Saṁhitās*, born? by which wife of Vyāsadeva, and how? O highly intelligent one! You have just spoken that Śukadeva was not born from womb in the natural way; he was born of the dry pieces of wood for *homa* sacrifice. But we heard before that the great ascetic was a *yogī* even in his mother's womb, so a great doubt comes to our minds. You better remove that today; how he studied these *Purāṇas*, vast in their nature; also describe this."

4-5. Sūta said: "In long-past days, Satyavatī's son Vedavyāsa, while in his own hermitage on the banks of the river Sarasvatī, greatly wondered to see a pair of *chātakas* (sparrows). He saw the pair putting food in the beak of their young, just born of the egg, of beautiful body, red mouth, and greasy body. They did not care at all for their own hunger and toil; all they cared for was to nurture their young ones. He saw also that the pair are rubbing their bodies over the body and kissing lovingly the mouth of the young one and feeling the highest pleasure. Seeing this wonderful affection of the two sparrows towards their young, Vedavyāsa became very anxious and thought over the following in his mind:

9-14. 'Oh! What wonder is there, when the birds have so much filial affection towards their child, that men, who want services from their sons, would show their affection towards their sons! This pair of sparrows will not perform the happy marriage of their young one and will not see the face of their son's wife; nor when they will grow old, that their child would become very religious and serve them to attain great merits in Heaven. Nor do they expect that their child would earn money and satisfy them; nor the child would perform their funeral obsequies duly when they die, and help them in their sojourn in the next world—nothing of all these. Nor will the child perform the *śrāddha* ceremony at Gayā; nor will the child offer the oblation of a blue bull on the day of offering the sacrifice to its ancestor (the bull is then let loose and held sacred); yet the pair of sparrows have so

much affection towards their young one! Oh! in this world to touch the body of the son, especially to nurture the sons, is the highest happiness in life.

15-27. There is no prospect in the after birth of the sonless; never, never will Heaven be his. Without son, there is none other who can be of help in the next world. Thus in the *dharma-śāstras*, Manu and other Munis declare that the man who has sons goes to Heaven, and the sonless one can never go to Heaven. That the man possessing a son is entitled to the Heavenly pleasures can be vividly seen, rather than imagined. The man with son is freed from sins; this is the word of the *Vedas*. The sonless man becomes very much distressed even at the time of death and while lying on bed that is ground at that time, mournfully thinks. "This all my vast wealth, various things, this my beautiful house, who will enjoy all these?"

When the sonless man is thus perplexed in his mind at the time of his death and becomes restless, then it is sure that his future career is full of misfortune; unless one's mind is calm and serene at the time of death, one can never attain a good goal.'

Thus thinking variously, the Satyavatī's son Vedavyāsa sighed heavily and became mindful. He thought of various plans and at last, coming to a definite conclusion, went to the Sumeru mountain to perform *tapasyā*. On reaching there, he thought, 'Now which Deva will I worship? Viṣṇu, Śiva, Indra, Brahmā, Surya, Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya, Agṇi or Varuṇa? Who will grant me a boon quickly and thus satisfy my desire?'

While thus cogitating in his mind, came there the Nārada Muni, of one mind with *vīnā* in hand, accidentally in his course of travels. Seeing Nārada, the Satyavatī's son Vedavyāsa gave him a hearty welcome, with great gladness, offering him *arghya* and *āsana* (seat) and asked about his welfare. Hearing this question of welfare, Nārada Muni spoke: 'O Dvaipāyana! Why do you look so careworn! First speak this out to me.'

28-30. Vedavyāsa said: 'The sonless man has no goal; therefore there is no happiness in my mind; I am always anxious to get a son and therefore I am very sorry. Today my mind is sorely troubled with the one idea: which Deva I may satisfy by my *tapasyā*, who will grant my desires? Now I take your refuge. O merciful Maharṣi! You are omniscient; say this quickly: which Deva will I take for my refuge, who will grant me a son?'

31-37. Sūta said: "Thus questioned by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa, the high-souled Nārada Muni, well versed in the *Vedas*, became very glad and spoke thus: 'O highly fortunate Parāśarā's son, the question that you have asked me today was formerly asked by my father to Nārāyaṇa. At this, Nārāyaṇa Vāsudeva, the Deva of the Devas, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe, the husband of Lakṣmī, the four-armed, wearing yellow garment, holding conchshell, discus, club and with the mark *Śrīvatsa* (a mark or curl of hair on the heart of Viṣṇu) adorning His breast and decorated with Kaustuva gem, the Divinity Himself, became merged in great *yoga;* at this my Father became greatly surprised and said: 'O Janārdana! Thou art the Deva of the Devas; the Lord of the Present, the Past and the Future, the Lord of this Universe; why art thou meditating in *yoga?* And what is it that Thou art meditating? O best of the Devas! Thou art the Lord of the entire Universe and yet Thou art now merged in deep meditation. At this I am greatly surprised. What more wonderful than this can happen?

38-43. O Lord of Ramā! I am sprung from the lotus from thy navel and have become the Lord of this whole universe; who is there in this universe that is superior to Thee; kindly reveal this to me. O Lord of the world? Thou art the Origin of all, the Cause of all causes, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer and the capable Doer of all actions. O Mahārāja! at Thy will, I create this whole universe and Rudra destroys this world in due time. He is always under Thy command. O Lord! By Thy command the Sun roams in the sky; the wind blows in various auspicious or inauspicious ways and the fire is giving heat and the cloud showers rain. I don't see in the three *lokas* anyone superior to Thee. Then whom art Thou meditating on?

This is my main point of doubt. O One of good vows! I am Thy devotee; be merciful to me and speak this to me. There is almost nothing that is secret to Mahāpuruṣas; this is a well-known fact.'

44-50. Thus hearing Brahmā's words, Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa replied: 'O Brahmā! I now speak out my mind to you; listen carefully. Though the Devas, Dānavas and men and all the *lokas* know that You are the Creator, I am the Preserver and Rudra is the Destroyer, yet it is to be known that the saints, versed in the *Vedas*, have come to this conclusion by inference from the *Vedas* that the creation, preservation, and destruction are performed by the creative force, preservative force and destructive force respectively. The *rājasik* creative force residing in you, the *sāttvik* preservative force residing in me, and the *tāmasik* destructive force residing in Rudra are the all-in-all. When these Śaktis become absent, you become inert and incapable to create, I to preserve and Rudra to destroy.

O intelligent Suvrata! We all are always under that Force directly or indirectly; hear instances that you can see and infer. At the time of *pralaya*, I lie down on the bed of Ananta, subservient to that Force; again I wake up in the time of creation duly under the influence of Time.

51-54. I am always subservient to that Mahāśakti; under Her command I am engaged in *tapasyā* for a long time; by Her command sometimes I enjoy with Lakṣmī; sometimes I fight battles, terrible to all the *lokas*, with the Dānavas, involving great bodily troubles. O Knower of *dharma!* In your presence I fought hand-to-hand for five thousand years on that one great ocean in long-past days with the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha, sprung from the wax of my ear, maddened with pride; and by the grace of the Devī, I successfully killed the two Dānavas.

55-61. O highly fortunate one! you realized then the great *śakti*, higher than the highest and the cause of all causes; then why are you asking again and again that question. By the will of that *śakti*, I have got this idea of man and roam on the great ocean; in *yuga* after *yuga*, I assume by Her will, the Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, and Dwarf incarnations. No one likes to take

birth in the womb of inferior animals (especially birds). Do you think that I willingly take unpleasant births as in the womb of boars, tortoise, etc.? Certainly not. What independent man is there who abandons the pleasurable enjoyment with Lakṣmī and takes birth in inferior animals as fish, etc. or leaves his seat on the seat of Garuḍa and becomes engaged in great war-conflicts. O Svayambhu! In ancient days you saw before your eyes that my head was cut off when the bowstring suddenly gave way; and then you brought a horse's head and by that help, the divine artist Viśvakarma stuck that on to my headless body. O Brahmā! Since then I am known amongst men by the name of Hayagrīva. This is well-known to you. Now say, were I independent, would such an ignominy have happened to me? Never. Therefore I am not independent; I am in every way under that *śakti*. O Lotus-born! I always meditate on that *śakti;* and I do not know any other than this *śakti*.'

62-66. Nārada said: 'Thus spoke Viṣṇu to Brahmā. O Muni Vedavyāsa! Brahmā spoke these to me. So you, too, better meditate the lotus feet of Bhāgavatī calmly in the lotus of your heart for the success of your idea. That Devī will give you all that you wish.'

Sūta said: "At these words of Nārada, Satyavatī's son Vedavyāsa went out to the hills for *tapasyā*, trusting the lotus feet of the Devī as the all-in-all in this world."

Thus ends the fourth chapter of the first Skandha on the excellency of the Devī in the Mahāpurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter V—The Story of Hayagrīva

1-4. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! Our minds are merged in the sea of doubt, hearing this your most wonderful saying, surpṛṣing to the whole world. The head of Janārdan Mādhava, the Lord of all, was severed from His body! And He was afterwards known as Hayagrīva, the horse-faced! Oh! what more wonder can there be than this? Whom the *Vedas* even praise,

Whom all the Devas rest on, Who is the Cause of all causes, the *ādi-deva* Jagannāth (the Lord of the universe), Oh! how is it that His head came to be severed! O highly intelligent one! Describe all this to us in detail."

5-9. Sūta said: "O Munis! Hear all attentively the glorious deeds of the supremely energetic Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas. Once on a time the eternal Deva Janārdana became tired after the terrible continuous battle for ten thousand years. After this the Lord Nārāyaṇa seated Himself in *padmāsana* in some lovely place on a level plot of ground; and placing his head on the front of his bow with the bow strung and placed erect on the ground, fell fast asleep. Viṣṇu, the Lord of Ramā, was exceedingly tired and thus he fell soon into deep sleep. At this time Indra and the other Devas, with Brahmā and Maheṣa, began a sacrifice.

10-13. Then they, for the sake of success, went to the region of Vaikuṇṭha to meet with the Deva Janārdana, the Lord of sacrifices. There the Devas, not finding Viṣṇu, came to know by *dhyāna* (meditation) where Bhagavān Viṣṇu was staying, and thither they went. They saw that the Lord Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas was lying unconscious, being under the arms of *yoga-nidrā*. Therefore they took their seats there. Seeing the Lord of the universe asleep, Brahmā, Rudra and the other Devas became anxious.

14-18. Indra then addressed the Devas: 'O best of the Suras! Now what is to be done? How shall we rouse Bhagavān from His sleep? Now think of the means by which this can be effected.'

Hearing Indra's words Śambhu said: 'O good Devas! Now we must finish our sacrificial work. But if the sleep of Bhagavān be disturbed, He would get angry.' Hearing Śaṅkara's words, Paramesthī Brahmā created *vamrī* insects (a sort of white ants) so that they might eat up the forepart of the bow that was lying on the ground causing the other end to rise up and thus break His sleep. Thus the Devaś purpose would, no doubt, be fulfilled. Thus settling his mind, the eternal Deva Brahmā ordered the *vamrīs* to cut the bow string.

19-22. Hearing this order of Brahmā, the *vamrī* spoke to Brahmā, thus: 'O Brahmā! How can I disturb the sleep of the Devadeva, Lord of Lakṣmī, the World-*guru?* To rouse one from one's deep sleep, to interrupt one in one's speech, to sever the love between a couple husband wife, to separate a child from his mother—all these are equivalent to *brahmāhatyā* (murdering a Brahmāṇa). Therefore, O Deva! how can I interrupt the happiuess of sleep of the Devadeva? And what benefit shall I derive by eating the bowstring, so that I may incur this vicious act? But a man can commit a sin if there be any interest of his; I am ready to eat this, if I get a personal interest.'

23-24. Brahmā said: 'We will give you, too, share in this our *yajña* (sacrifice); so hear me; do our work and rouse Viṣṇu from His sleep. During the time of performing *homa,* whatever ghee will fall outside the *homa-kuṇḍa* (the sacrificial pit) will fall to your share; so be quick and do this.'

25-30. Sūta said: "Thus ordered by Brahmā, the Vamrī insect soon ate away the fore end of the bow that rested on the ground. Immediately the string gave way and the bow went up; the other end became free and a terrible sound took place. The Devas bcame afraid; the whole universe got agitated; the earth trembled. The sea became swollen; the aquatic animals became startled; violent wind blew; the mountains shook; ominous meteors fell. The quarters assumed a terrific aspect; the Sun went down the horizon. In that time of distress the Devas became anxious what evil might come down. O ascetics! while the Devas were thus cogitating, the head with crown on it of the Devadeva Viṣṇu vanished away ; nobody knew where it fell.

31-36. When the awful darkness disappeared, Brahmā and Mahādeva saw the disfigured body of Viṣṇu with its head off. Seeing that headless figure of Viṣṇu they were greatly surprised; they were drowned in the ocean of cares and, overwhelmed with grief, began to weep aloud:

'O Lord! O Master! O Devadeva! O Eternal one! what unforeseen extraordinary mishap occurred to us today! O Deva! Thou canst not be pierced nor cut asunder, nor capable of being burnt; how is it then that Thy

head has been taken away! Is this the *māyā* (magic) of some Deva? O all-pervading one! The Devas cannot live when Thy condition is thus; we do not know what affection dost Thou have towards us. We are crying because of our selfish ends; perhaps this therefore has occurred. The Daityas, Yakṣas or Rākṣasas have not done this; O Lord of Lakṣmī! Whose fault will we ascribe this to? The Devas themselves have committed this loss to themselves?

37-41. O Lord of the Devas! The Devas are now dependent! They are under Thee. Now where are we to go? What are we to do? There is none to save the dull stupid Devas!'

At this juncture, seeing Śiva and the other Devas crying, Bṛhaspati, supremely versed in the *Vedas*, consoled them thus: 'O highly fortunate one! what use there will be in thus crying and repenting? You ought now to consider the means that you should adopt to redress your calamities. O Lord of the Devas! Fate and one's own exertion and intelligence are equal; if the success comes not through Fate (Luck or chance) one is certainly to show one's prowess and merit.'

42-46. Indra said: 'Fie to your exertion when before our eyes, the head of Bhagavān Viṣṇu Himself has been carried off! Fie, Fie to your prowess and intelligence! Fate is, in my opinion, supreme.'

Brahmā said: 'Whatever auspicious or inauspicious is ordained by Daiva (Fate), everyone must bear that; no one can go beyond the Daiva. When one has taken up a body, one must experience pleasure and pain; there is no manner of doubt in this. See, in long-past days, by the irony of Fate, Śambhu severed my head; His generative organ, too, dropped down through curse. Similarly Hari's head has, today, fallen into the salt ocean. By the influence of time, Indra, the Lord of Saci, had thousand genital marks over his body, was expelled from Heaven and had to live in the Mānasarovar in the lotuses and had to suffer many other miseries.

47-50. O Glorious ones! When such personages have suffered pains, then who else is there in the world that dues not suffer! So you all cease sorrows and meditate on the Eternal Mahā-māyā; who is the Mother of all, who is supporter of all, who is of the nature of *brahmavidyā* (the Supreme Knowledge) and who is beyond the *guṇas*, who is the Prime Prākriti, and who pervades the three *lokas*, the whole universe, moving and unmoving; She will dispense our welfare.'

Sūta said: "Thus saying to the Devas, Brahmā ordered all the *Vedas*, that were incarnate there in their forms, for the successful issue of the Devaś work.

51-54. Brahmā said: 'O *Vedas!* Now go on and chant hymns to the Sacred Highest Devī Mahā-māyā, who is *brahmavidyā*, who brings all issues to their successful conclusion, who is hidden in all forms.'

Hearing his words, the all-beautiful *Vedas* began to chant hymns to Mahā-māyā, who can be comprehended by *jñāṇa* and who pervades the world.

The *Vedas* said: 'Obeisance to the Devī! to the Mahā-māyā! to the Auspicious One! to the Creatrix of the Universe! We bow down to Thee, who is beyond the Guṇas, the Ruler of all the Beings! O Mother! Thou givest to Śaṅkara even His desires. Thou art the receptacle of all the things; Thou art the Prāṇa of all the living beings; Thou art Buddhi, Lakṣmī (wealth), *śobhā* (beauty), *kśamā* (forgiveness), *śānti* (peace), *śraddhā* (faith), *medhā* (intellect), *dhṛti* (fortitude), and *smṛti* (recollection).

55. Thou art the *bindu* (*ṁ*) over the *prāṇava* (*āūṁ*) and thou art of the nature of the crescent moon; Thou art Gāyatrī, Thou art Vyāhṛti; Thou art Jayā, Vijayā, *dhātri* (the supportress), *lajjā* (modesty), *kīrti* (fame), *icchā* (will) and *dayā* (mercy) in all beings.

56-57. O Mother! Thou art the merciful Mother of the three worlds; Thou art the adorable auspicious *vidyā* (knowledge) benefitting all the *lokas;* Thou destroyest the Universe and Thou skilfully residest hidden in the *bīja-*

mantras. Therefore we are praising Thee. O Mother! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra, Sūrya, Fire, Sarasvatī and other Regents of the Universe are all Thy creation; so none of them is superior to Thee. Thou art the Mother of all the things, moving and non-moving.

58-61. O Mother ! When Thou dost will to create this visible Universe, Thou createst first Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara and makest them create, preserve and destroy this universe; but Thou remainest quite unattached to the world. Ever Thou remainest constant in Thy one form. No one in this Universe is able to know Thy nature; nor there is anybody who can enumerate Thy names. How can he promise to jump across the illimitable ocean, who cannot jump across an ordinary well?

O Bhagavatī! No one amongst the Devas even knows particularly Thy endless power and glory. Thou art alone the Lady of the Universe and the Mother of the world.

62-68. The *Vedas* all bear testimony how thou alone hast created all this unreal and fleeting universe. O Devī! Thou without any effort and having no desires hast become the cause of this visible world, Thyself remaining unchanged. This is a great wonder. We cannot conceive this combination of contrary varieties in one. O Mother! How can we understand thy power, unknown to all the *Vedas* even, when Thou Thyself dost not know thy nature! We are bewildered at this.

O Mother! Is it that Thou dost know nothing about the falling off of Viṣṇu's head! Or knowingly thou wanted to examine Viṣṇu's prowess? Is it that Hari incurred any heinous sin? How can that be! Where is sin to thy followers who serve Thee? O Mother! Why art Thou so much indifferent to the Devas? It is a great wonder that the head of Viṣṇu is severed! Really, we are merged in great misfortunes. Thou art clever in removing the sorrows of Thy devotees. Why art Thou delaying in fixing again the head on Viṣṇu's body?

O Devī! Is it that Thou, taking offence on the gods hast cast that on Viṣṇu? or was it that Viṣṇu became proud and to curb that, Thou hast played thus? or is it that the Daityas, having suffered defeat from Viṣṇu went and practiced severe *tapasyā* in some beautiful holy place, and have got some boons; and so Viṣṇu's head has thus fallen off?

Or is it, O Bhagavatī! that Thou wert very eagerly interested to see Viṣṇu's headless body and therefore Thou hast seen thus? O Prime Force! Is it that Thou art angry on the daughter of the Sindhu (ocean); Lakṣmī-devī? Else, why hast Thou deprived Her of Her husband? Lakṣmī is born as a part of Thine; so Thou oughtest to forgive Her offence.

Therefore dost Thou gladden Her by giving back Her husband's life.

The principal Devas, engaged in Thy service, always make their *praṇāmas* (bow down) to Thee; O Devī! Beest Thou kind enough and make alive the Deva Viṣṇu, the Lord of all, and take us across this ocean of sorrows. O Mother! We cannot make out anything whatsoever where Hari's head has gone. We have no other protectress than Thee who canst give back His life. O Devī! Dost Thou give life to the whole world as the nectar gives life to all the Devas.'

69-73. Sūta said: "Thus praised by the *Vedas* with their *Aṅgas*, with *sāmagaṇas* (the songs from the *Sāma-veda*), the Nirgunā Maheśvari Devī Mahā-māyā became pleased. Then the auspicious voice came to them from the Heavens, gladdening all, and pleasing to the ears though no form was seen:

'O Suras! Do not care anything about it; you are immortal; so what fear can you have? Come to your senses. I am very much pleased by the praise sung by the *Vedas*. There is no doubt about this. Amongst men, whoever will read this My *stotra* with devotion, will get all what he desires. Whoever will hear this devotedly, during the three *sandhyās*, will live freed from troubles and become happy. When this *stotra* has been sung by the *Vedas*, it is equivalent to the *Vedas*.

74-75. Does anything take place in this world without any cause? Now hear why Hari's head was cut off. Once on a time, seeing the beautiful face of His dear wife Lakṣmī-devī, Hari laughed in presence of Her.

76-82. At this Lakṣmī-devī came to understand that 'He surely has seen something ugly in My face, and therefore He laughed; otherwise why My Husband would laugh at seeing Me? But what reason can there be as to see ugliness in My face after so long a time? And why shall He laugh without seeing something ugly, without any cause? Or it may be, He has made some other beautiful woman as my co-wife.'

Thus arguing variously in her mind, Mahā-Lakṣmī gradually got angry and *tamo-guṇa* slowly possessed Her. Then, by turn of Fate, in order that god's work might be completed, very fierce *tāmasik śakti* entered into Her body. She got very angry and slowly said: 'Let Thy head fall off.' Thus, owing to feminine nature and the destiny of Bhagavān, Lakṣmī cursed without any thought of good or bad, causing Her own suffering. By the *tāmasik śakti* possessing Her, She thought that a co-wife would be more painful than Her widowhood, and thus She cursed Him.

83-86. Falsehood, vain boldness, craftiness, stupidity, impatience, over-greediness, impurity, and harshness are the natural qualities of women. Owing to that curse, the head of Vāsudeva has fallen into the salt ocean. Now I will fix the head on His body as before. O Sura Sattamas! There is another cause, also, regarding this affair. That will bring you great success. In ancient days a famous Daitya named Hayagrīva practiced severe *tapasyā* on the bank of the Sarasvatī river.

87-92. Abandoning all sorts of enjoyments, with control over his senses and without any food, the Daitya did *japam* of the one-syllable *māyā-bīja-mantra* (***hrīṁ***) and, meditating the form of the Utmost Śakti of Mine, adorned with all ornaments, practiced very terrible austerities for one thousand years. I, too, went to the place of austerities in My *tāmasik* form, meditated by the Daitya and appeared before him. There, seated on the Lion's back, feeling compassion for his *tapasyā* I spoke to him: "O glorious One! O one of good

vows! I have come to grant a boon to Thee!" Hearing the words of the Devī, the Daitya instantly got up and falling down with devotion at Her feet, circumambulated Her. Looking at My form, his large eyes became cheerful with feelings of love and filled with tears; shedding tears, then, he began to chant hymns to Me.

93-95. Hayagrīva said: "Obeisance to the Devī Mahāmayī! I bow down to Thee, the Creatrix, the Preserver, and the Destructrix of the universe! Skilled in showing favor to Thy devotees! Giver of the devotee's desires! Obeisance to Thee! O Thou, the giver of liberation! O Thou! The auspicious one! I bow down to Thee. Thou art the cause of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and *ākāśa!* Thou art the cause of form, taste, smell, sound and touch. O Maheśvarī! the five *jñānendriyas* (organs of perception)—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin—and the karmendriyas (five organs of action) —hands, feet, speech, arms, and the organ of generation are all created by Thee."

96-100. The Devī said: "O child! I am very much satisfied with your wonderful *tapasyā* and devotion. Now say what boon do you want. I will give you the boon that you desire."

Hayagrīva said: "O Mother! grant me that boon by which death will not come to me, and I be invincible by the Suras and Asuras, I may be a *yogī* and immortal."

The Devī said: "Death brings in birth and birth brings in death; this is inevitable. This order of things is extant in this world; never its violation takes place. O best of the Rākṣasas! Thus knowing death sure, think in your mind and ask another boon."

Hayagrīva said: "O Mother of the universe! If it be that Thou art not willing at all to grant me immortality, then grant me this boon that my death may not occur from any other than from one who is horse-faced. Be merciful and grant me this boon that I desire."

101-105. "O highly fortunate one! Go home and govern your kingdom at your ease; death won't occur to you from any other beings then from one who is horse-faced."

Thus granting the boon, the Devī vanished. Becoming very glad on getting this boon, Hayagrīva went to his residence. Since then the wicked Daitya is troubling very much all the Devas and Munis. There is none in the three worlds to kill him. So let Viśvakarmā take a horse's head and fix it on the headless body of Viṣṇu. Then Bhagavān Hayagrīva will slay the vicious wicked Asura, for the good of the Devas.'

106-112. Sūta said: "Thus speaking to the Devas, Bhagavatī Śarvāṇī remained silent. The Devas became very glad and spoke this to Viśvakarmā: 'Kindly do this Deva work and fix Viṣṇu's head. He will become Hayagrīva and kill the indomitable Dānava.'

Sūta said—"Hearing these words, Viśvakarmā quickly cut off the head of a horse with his axe, brought it before the Devas and fixed it on the headless body of Viṣṇu. By the grace of Mahā-māyā, Bhagavān became horse-faced or Hayagrīva. Then, a few days after, Bhagavān Hayagrīva killed that proud Dānava, the Devaś enemy, by sheer force. Any man, hearing this excellent anecdote, certainly becomes freed of all sorts of difficulties. Hearing or reading Mahā-māyā's glorious deeds, pure and sin-destroying, gives all sorts of wealth.

Thus ends the fifth chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the narrative of Hayagrīva in the Mahā Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter VI—preparation for war by Madhu & Kaitabha

1-44. The Ṛṣis said: "O Saumya! Just now you have spoken of the fight for five thousand years, in that great ocean, between Bhagavān Śauri and Madhu Kaitabha. How was it that the two greatly powerful Dānavas,

invincible of the Devas, came to be born there? And why did Bhagavān Hari kill them? O highly intelligent one! Kindly describe that greatly wonderful event. We all are extremely eager to hear it, and you are the great Paṇḍita and speaker, present before us. It is our good luck that we have come across you here. As the contact with the illiterate is very painful, so the contact with the literate is very happy like nectar. The animals in this world live like illiterates; they eat, call for their nature, void urines and faeces, and know wonderfully well the sexual intercourse. Only they want discriminative knowledge of right and wrong, of the real and unreal, and a knowledge of discrimination leading to *mokṣa* or final liberation; this is the only point of difference. Therefore the persons that have no liking to hear of *Bhāgavata* and books like it, are like beasts; there is no doubt about this. Behold! Deer and some other animals can enjoy well the sense of hearing like men; and the serpents, though wanting in the organ of hearing, become charmed quite like men, as if tasting the pleasure of hearing sweet sounds. Verily out of the five organs of perception the organ of hearing and the organ of sight are benefitting, for the knowledge of things arises from hearing and the heart is pleased by seeing. Therefore the Paṇḍitas divide in three classes, the objects of hearing: *sāttvik*, *rājasik* and *tāmasik*. The *Vedas* and other *śāstras* are *sāttvik;* the *Sāhitya* (worldly) literature is *rājasik*, and war news and finding fault with others is *tāmasik*. The wise persons again subdivide the *sāttvik* into three sub-classes: good, middling and worst. That which gives *mokṣa* is good or excellent; that which gives Heaven is middling, and that which gives this worldly pleasure is worst. In the same way, the *Sāhitya* literature is of three kinds: That which describes the people to live with their legitimate wives is the best; which describes about prostitutes is the middling; and that which makes people live with other's wives is the worst.

The seers of *śāstras*, the learned men divide the subjects of the *tāmasik* hearing into three classes: That in which fight with the enemies according to *dharma* is described is best; where the fight, as of the Pāṇḍavas, with the enemies out of hatred, ill-feeling, is described is middling; and that where fighting is described without any cause is worst. Therefore, O highly

intelligent one! Hearing the *Purāṇas* is far superior to hearing other *śāstras*, for thereby sins are destroyed, intellect is increased and *puṇya* (good merits) is stored. So, O intelligent one! Kindly describe to us the *Purāṇas*, fulfilling all the requirements of life, that you heard before from the mouth of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana."

Hearing these words of the Ṛṣis, Sūta said: "O highly fortunate ones! When you all are desirous to hear the *Purāṇas* and I am ready to tell them, then both of us are blessed on the surface of the earth.

In days of yore, in the time of *pralaya* (universal dissolution) when the three lokas and the entire universe dissolved in water, when the Devadeva Janārdana was lying asleep on the bed of Ananta, the thousand-headed serpent, arose from the wax of the ear of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the two very powerful Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha; they grew in the waters of the ocean and played around in the waters and thus passed some of their time. Once on a time, when the two huge-bodied Dānavas were playing with each other like two brothers, they thought thus:

'The general rule of the universe is that no effect takes place without a cause, and nothing can rest without the receptacle thereof. But we cannot understand what is our receptacle or who is resting on us. Whereon rests this pleasant expanse of wide ocean? Who was it that created this? How was this created? Why are we living here merged within the water? Who created us? and who are our father and mother? Nothing of a these we know.'

Thus thinking, when they could not come to any conclusion, Kaitabha spoke to Madhu, beside him, within the waters: 'O Brother! It seems to me the great immoveable force that makes us rest in this water is the cause of all. This whole mass of water, too, pervaded by that force, rests on that; that Highest Devī must be the Cause of us.'

When the two Asuras, merged in this thought, understood this, they heard in the air the beautiful *vāg-bīja* (***aiṁ***, the seed *mantra* of *vāk*, speech, the

Devī Sarasvatī). They then began to pronounce repeated the *vāg-bīja mantra* and practiced it with the great steadfastness. Next they saw, risen high up in the air, the auspicious lightning and thought that:

'Certainly our *mantra* that we are repeating has made Herself visible in this form of light, and thus we have seen certainly in the air, the *saguṇa* form (with attributes) of Sarasvatī, the goddess of Speech.' Thus thinking in their minds they, without any food, with their minds controlled, constantly thought of that, with their whole mind collected on that, and repeating and meditating the *mantra* became one with that. Thus they passed one thousand years in practising that great *tapas.* When the highest *ādyā-śakti* became pleased with them, seeing the two Dānavas steadfast in the practice of *tapas*, She addressed them invisibly in the way of celestial voice thus:

"O two Dānavas! I am exceedingly pleased with your *tapasyā;* so ask a boon whatever you desire; I will grant it." Hearing, then, the celestial voice, thus the two Dānavas said: "O Devī! O Suvrate! Grant us that we will die when we will." Hearing this, Vagdevī said: "O two Dānavas! Certain by My grace, you two will die when you will, and you two brothers will be invincible by all the Suras and Asuras. There is no doubt about this."

Sūta said: "When the Devī granted them this boon, the two Dānavas, puffed up with pride, began to play with the aquatic animals in the ocean. O Brahmāṇas! Some days thus passed away when the two powerful Dānavas saw the Brahmā, the Prajāpati, seated on the lotus of navel of Hari. Doubt came on their minds and they told him with a view to fight:

'O Suvrata! Either fight with us, or leave off this lotus seat and go anywhere you like. If you be so weak, this auspicious lotus seat is not fit for you; for this should be enjoyed by heroes. So if you be a coward, leave it quickly.' Hearing these words of the Dānavas, Prajāpati, engaged in the practice of *tapasyā*, saw the two great powerful heroes and began to think anxiously 'What should be done now?' and waited there.

Thus ends the sixth chapter of the first Skandha on the preparation for war by Madhu Kaitabha in the Mahāpurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—praise of the Devī

1-26. Sūta said: "Seeing the two Dānavas very powerful, Brahmā, the knower of all the *śāstras*, thought of the means *sāma, dāna, bheda* and *daṇḍa* (conciliation, gifts, bribe or sowing dissension, and war or punishment); which of these four he should apply. He thought thus:

'I do not know their strength and it is not advisable to enter into war without knowing their strength. Again if I offer praises to them, puffed up with pride, it will be simply displaying my own weakness; and when they will come to know this, only one of them will be sufficient to kill me and this they will do certainly. To offer bribes is not also advisable; and how can I sow dissensions? Therefore it is best that I should rouse the four-armed Janārdana Viṣṇu, who is very powerful, from his sleep on the thousand-headed Ananta serpent. He will remove my difficulties."

Thus thinking in his mind, the lotus-born Bhagavān Brahmā, remained in the tubular stalk of the lotus from Viṣṇu's navel and thence took refuge mentally of Viṣṇu, the remover of difficulties, and began to chant auspicious hymns composed of various metres to Jagannāth Nārāyaṇa, involved in deep *yoga-nidrā* (meditative sleep). He said:

'O Refuge of the poor! O Hari! O Viṣṇu! O Vāmana! O Mādhava, Thou art the Lord of the universe and omnipresent. O Hṛṣikeśa! Thou removest all the difficulties of Thy devotees; therefore leave your *yoga-nidrā* and get up. O Vāsudeva! O Lord of the Universe! Thou residest within the hearts of all and knowest their desires.

O Thou, holder of the disc and club! Thou always destroyest the enemies of Thy devotees; O Omniscient One! Thou art the Lord of all the *lokas* and all-

powerful; no one can know what is Thy form; O Lord of the Devas! Thou art the destroyer of all pains and sufferings! So get up and protect me. O Protector of the Universe! nothing is concealed from Thy eyes! Everyone becomes pure by hearing and chanting Thy name. Thou art *nirākāra* (without any form); yet Thou createst, preservest and destroyest the Universe. O Cause of the world! O Supporter of all! Thou art shining as king of kings over all and yet Thou dost not understand that the two Dānavas, puffed up with pride have become ready to kill me. If thou dost neglect me, seeing me very much distressed and under your protection then Thy name as Preserver will become quite useless.'

Thus praised, when Viṣṇu did not get up, Brahmā thought that 'Bhagavān Viṣṇu is now surely under the influence of sleep of the Primal Force *ādyā-śakti* and is not therefore getting up; what am I to do now, thus distressed! These two Dānavas, elated with pride are ready to kill me; now what am I to do and where shall I go? I don't find anybody who can protect me anywhere.'

Thus thinking, Brahmā came to the conclusion and decided to chant hymns to Yoga-nidrā Herself with one-pointed heart. Discussing in his mind, He thought that: 'That *ādyā-śakti* (the Prime Force) which kept Bhagavān Viṣṇu senseless and motionless would alone be able to save me. As a dead man cannot hear any sound so Hari, merged in deep sleep, knows not anything. When I have praised Him so much and when He has not awakened, then it is certain that sleep is not under Hari, but Hari is under sleep, and he who is under another becomes his slave; so this Yoga-Nidrā is now exercising Her control over Hari. Again she, too, who brought Hari under control, that daughter of the *kṣīra* (milk) ocean is now under the control of Yoga-Nidrā; so it seems that that Bhagavatī Mahā-māyā has brought the whole Universe under Her control.

Whether it be Myself, or Viṣṇu or Śambhu, or Sāvitrī or Ramā or Umā, all are under Her control; there is nothing to be doubted here. What to speak of other high-souled persons! Now I will chant hymns to Yoga-Nidrā,

under whose influence Bhagavān Hari even is lying under deep sleep, inert like an ordinary man. When the eternal Vāsudeva Janārdana will be dispossessed by Her, He will no doubt fight with the Dānavas.'

Thus deciding, Bhagavān Brahmā, seated on the tubular stalk of the lotus, began to chant hymns to Yoga-Nidrā, residing on the body of Viṣṇu, thus:

27-32. Brahmā said: "O Devī! I have come to understand on the authority of all the words of the *Vedas*, that Thou art the only One Cause of this Universal Brahmāṇḍa. The more so, when Thou hast brought the best Puruṣa Viṣṇu, endowed with discrimination above all beings, under the control of sleep, then the above remark is self-evident.

O Thou, the Player in the minds of all beings! O Mother! I am extremely ignorant of the knowledge of Thy nature; when Bhagavān Hari is sleeping inert by Thy power, then who is there amongst *kotis* and *kotis* of wise men who can understand completely the *līlā* (pastime), full of Māyā of Thine, who art beyond the *guṇas*. The Sāṅkhya philosophers say (that the *puruṣa* (the male aspect of *śakti*) is the pure, conscious being and that Thou art the Prakṛti, without any consciousness, material inert, Creatrix of the universe; but, O Mother! art Thou really inert like that? Never! Had it been like that, how is it that Thou hast made Bhagavān Hari, the receptable of the world, quite unconscious like this? O Bhavānī! Thou, being beyond the *guṇas* art displaying like a dramatic performance these various dramatic plays by the conjunction with the three *guṇas*. It is Thy three qualities—*sattva, rājas* and *tamas*—that the Munis meditate every day in the morning, midday, and evening, the three Sandhyās; but no one is aware of Thy ways of doings.

O Devī! Thou art of the nature of the judgment and understanding, giving rise to knowledge of all the beings in the Universe; Thou art always the Śrī (wealth and prosperity) giving pleasures to the Devas. O Mother! Thou art reigning in all as *kīrti* (fame), *mati* (intellect), *dhṛti* (fortitude), *kānti* (beauty) *śraddhā* (faith) and *rati* (enjoyment). O Mother! Now I am put to great difficulties and therefore I have got eyewitness of Thy nature; no need of further reasoning and discussing about it.

27-50. I have now known that verily, verily Thou art the only Mother of all the worlds, as Thou hast brought Hari under the influence of sleep. O Devī! Now when it is evident that all the worlds and so on have come from Thee, then the *Vedas* have also come from Thee; what doubt is there? So the *Vedas*, too, do not know fully Thy nature; for the effect can never know its cause. So, it is very true that Thou art incomprehensible of the *Vedas*, O Mother! When I, Hari, Hara and the other Devas and my son Nārada and other Munis have not able to realize Thy nature fully, then who else can be so intelligent in this world that will realize all Thy nature? So Thy glory is beyond the speech of all beings. O Devī! If, in the place of sacrifice, the ritualists, the knowers of the *Vedas*, do not utter Thy name Svāhā, then the Devas, participators of the offerings in *yajña*, do not get their share, however hundreds of oblations be offered; so Thou art also the giver of sustenance allowances to the Devas. O Bhagavatī! In previous *kalpas*, Thou hadst saved me terrified from the fear of the Dānavas. O Devī Varade! now, too, I am terrified at the sight of the terrible forms of Madhu and Kaitabha and take Thy refuge. O high-minded one! Now I thoroughly see that by Thee, by Thy power Yoganidrā the whole body of Bhagavān Viṣṇu is senseless—but how is it that Thou dost not realize my sufferings? So, either dost Thou leave possession of this *ādi-deva*, or destroy Thyself these two Danavendras—just do either of the two as Thou likest. O Devī! Those that do not know Thy extraordinary powers, those stupid ones meditate Hari, Hara, etc. But O Mother! By Thy grace, I realize today, as eyewitness, that Viṣṇu even is today lying unconscious in deep sleep, totally senseless of anything outside by Thy force. O Bhagavatī! Now, when Kamalā the daughter of Sindhu is unable to rouse Her husband Hari, by Her effort, or rather Thou hast made Her, too, perforce, sleep unconsciously, it seems she is without any effort and does not know anything of what is going on outside.

O Devī! Verily those are blessed who worship Thy lotus feet with their whole heart full of devotion and without any hope of getting rewards, abandoning the worship of other Devas and knowing Thee as the Creatrix of the whole world and giver of all desires. Alas! now the intelligence,

beauty, fame, and all good qualities have forsaken Hari and fled away to some unknown quarters. O Bhagavatī! Thou art really adorable in the three worlds for, by Thy power of Yoganidrā, Hari has been kept in prison, as it were, in this way. O Mother! Thou art the *śakti* of all this universe and endowed with all prowess and energy; all other things are Thy creation. As a dramatic player, though one, plays in the theatre assuming many forms, so Thou too, being one, playest always in this charming theatre of the world created by Thy *guṇas*, in various forms.

O Mother! Thou, in the beginning of the *yugas*, dost Manifest first the Viṣṇu form and givest him the pure *sāttvik* Śakti, free from any obscuration and thereby madest Him preserve the Universe; and now it is Thyself that hast kept Him thus unconscious; therefore, it is an undoubted fact that Thou art doing whatever Thou willest, O Bhagavatī! I am now in danger; if it be Thy desire not to kill me, then dost break the silence, look on me and show Thy mercy. O Bhavānī! If it be not Thy desire to kill me, then why hast Thou created these two Dānavas, my death incarnate? or is it that Thou wantedest to put me to ridicule. I have come to know of Thy wonderful acts; Thou createst this whole Universe, and Thyself remaining aloof, playest always and in the time of *pralaya* resolvest everything again into Thee. Therefore, O Bhavānī, what wonder is there, that Thou wouldst want to kill me in this way? But, O Mother! I won't feel any pain if Thou willingly killest me, but this is to my great dishonor that being given power over these beings, I would then be made an object to be killed by the Daityas; this, indeed, is hard to me. So, O Thou Līlāmayī like a sportive girl! get up! O Devī! assumest the wonderful form Thyself and killest me or the two Daityas, as Thou willest; or rouse Hari who will then kill the Daityas. All these are in Thy hands.'

Sūta said: "Thus praised by Brahmā, the Nidrā-Devī (goddess of sleep), of the nature of *tamo-guṇa*, quit the body of Bhagavān Hari and stood by Him. When thus left completely by the Devī Yoga-Nidrā, of unequalled brilliance and splendor, for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, Viṣṇu began to move his body, and at this Brahmā became very glad."

Thus ends the seventh chapter of the First Skandha on the praise of the Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—deciding who is to be worshipped

1-7. The Ṛṣis said: "O highly fortunate one! A great doubt has arisen on your statement. This is ascertained by all the wise men as written in the *Vedas, Purāṇas* and other *śāstras* that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, these three Devas are eternal. None is superior to them in this Brahmāṇḍa. Brahmā creates all the beings, Viṣṇu preserves and Maheśvar destroys all in due time. These are the causes of creation, preservation and destruction. The Trimūrti Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are really one form, indeed, Trimūrti in Unity and Unity in Trimūrti.

Being endowed respectively with *sattva, rājas* and *tamo-guṇas* they do their respective works. Amongst these, again, Purushottam Ādideva Jagannāth Hari, the husband of Kamalā is the best; for he is capable of doing all the actions; no other than the Viṣṇu, of unrivalled prowess is so capable. How is it, then that Yogamāyā has overpowered Hari with sleep and made him altogether senseless? O highly fortunate one! whither did, then, go that extraordinary self knowledge and power, etc., of Hari while alive? This is our greatest doubt; so kindly advise us that our this doubt be removed and our well-being be thus ensured.

8-30. What is that Śaktī? Which you mentioned to us before; as well by whom Viṣṇu is conquered? Whence is She born? What is the power of that Śaktī and what is Her nature? O Suvrata! explain to us these fully.

How was it that Yogamāyā overpowered with sleep the Highest Deity Bhagavān Viṣṇu who is everlasting-intelligence-bliss, who is the God of all, the Guru of the whole world, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, who is omnipresent, an incarnate of purity and holiness and beyond *rajoguṇa;* how was such a personage brought under the control of sleep? O Sūta! You are

very intelligent and the pupil of Vyasa Deva; destroy our this doubt by the sword of wisdom."

Hearing this, Sūta said: "O highly fortunate Munis! There is none in the three *lokas* who can clear this your doubt; even the mind-born sons of Brahmā—Nārada, Kapila and other eternal sons—get bewildered by these questions; what can I, then, say on this very difficult point! See, some persons call Bhagavān Viṣṇu omnipresent, the preserver of all and the best of all the Devas; according to them all this universe moving and non-moving, is created by Viṣṇu; they bow down before the Highest Nārāyan Hṛṣikeśa Janārdana Vāsudeva and worship Him; whereas others worship Mahādeva Śaṅkara, having Gaurī for the other half of his body, endowed with all powers, residing in Kailāśa, surrounded by hosts of *bhutas*, that destroyed the Dakṣa's sacrifice, who is mentioned in the *Vedas* as *śaśiśekhara* (having moon on his forehead), with three eyes and five faces and holding trident in his hand known as Vrisadhaja and Kaparddi. O highly intelligent ones! There are some other persons, that know the *Vedas* and worship the Sun everyday in the morning, midday and in the evening with various hymns.

In all the *Vedas*, it is stated that the worship of the sun is excellent and they have named the high-souled sun as Paramātmā (the Highest Deity). Whereas there are other Vedavits (the knowers of the *Vedas*) who worship the Devas, Fire, Indra, and Varuṇa. But the Maharṣis say, that as Gaṅgā Devi (the river Ganges), though one, is expressing Herself by many channels, so the one Viṣṇu is expressing in all the Deva forms.

Those who are big Paṇḍitas, declare perception, inference, and verbal testimony as the three modes of proofs. The Naiyāyik Paṇḍitas add to the above three, a fourth proof which they call *upamā*, resemblance, similitude and some other intelligent Paṇḍitas add another fifth proof called *arthāpatti*, an inference from circumstances, presumption or implication. It is deduction of a matter from that which could not else be; it is assumption of a thing, not itself perceived but necessarily implied by another which is

seen, heard or proved; whereas the authors of the *Purāṇas* add two other, called *sāksī* and *aitijhya*, thus advocating seven modes of proofs. Now the *Vedānta-śāstra* says that the supreme being (*parabrahman*), the prime cause of the Universe, cannot be comprehended by the above-mentioned seven proofs. Therefore, first of all, adopt the reason leading to sure belief, the *buddhi*, according to the words of the *Vedas,* and discriminate and discuss again and again and draw your inference about Brahman. And the intelligent person should adopt what is seen by perception as self-evident and what is inferred by the observance of good conduct. The wise persons say, and it is also stated in the *Purāṇas*, that the Prime Force is present in Brahmā as the Creative Force; is present in Hari as the Preservative Force; is present in Hara as the Destructive Force; is present in Kūrma (tortoise) and in Ananta (the thousand-headed Snake) as the earth-supporting Force; is present in fire as the Burning Force, is present in air as the moving Force, and so is present everywhere in various Manifestations of forces.

31-51. In this whole Universe, whoever he may be, all are incapable of any action if he be deprived of his force; what more than this, if Śiva be deprived of Kula Kuṇḍalinī-śaktī, He becomes a lifeless corpse; O great ascetic Ṛṣis! She is present everywere—thus in everything in this universe from the highest Brahmā to the lowermost blade of grass, all moving and non-moving things. Verily everything becomes quite inert if deprived of life force; whether in conquering one's enemies, or in going from one place to another or in eating—one finds oneself quite incapable, if deprived of force. Thus the omnipresent Śaktī, the wise call by the name of Brahman. Those who are verily intelligent should always worship Her in various ways and determine thoroughly the reality of Her by every means. In Viṣṇu there is the *sāttviki-śaktī;* then He can preserve; otherwise He is quite useless; so in Brahmā there is *rājasi-śaktī* and He creates; otherwise He is quite useless; in Śiva, there is *tāmasi-śaktī* and He destroys; else He is quite useless. Thus, arguing again and again in one's mind, everyone should come to know that the highest *ādya-śaktī* by Her mere will creates and preserves this Universe; and She it is who destroys again in time the whole Brahmāṇḍa, moving and non-moving; no one is capable to do his

respective work be he Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvar, Indra, Fire, Sun, Varuṇa or any other person whatsoever; verily all the Devas perform the respective actions by the use of this *ādya-śaktī*. That She alone is present in cause and effect and is doing every action, an be witnessed vividly. The intelligent ones call that Śaktī twofold; one is *saguṇā* and the other is *nirguṇā*. The people, attached to the senses and the objects, worship the *saguṇā* aspect, and those who are not so attached worship the *nirguṇa* aspect. That conscious Śaktī is the Lady of the fourfold aims of life: religion, wealth, desires and liberation. When She is worshipped according to due rules, She awards all sorts of desires. The worldly persons, charmed by the Māyā of this world, do not know Her at all; some persons know a little and charm others; whereas some stupid and dull-deaded Paṇḍitas, impelled by Kaliyuga, start sects of heretics, *pāṣaṇḍas* for the sustenance of their own bellies. O highly fortunate Munis! In no other Yugas were found acts as prevalent in this Kaliyuga, based on various different opinions and altogether beyond the pale of the Vedic injunctions.

Behold again, if Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa be the supreme Deities, then why do these three Devas meditate on another One beyond speech, beyond mind and practice, for years, with hard austerities; and why do they perform *yajñas* (sacrifices) for their success in creation, preservation, and destruction? They know, verily, the Highest Supreme Being, Brahmāṇi Devī Śaktī eternal and constant; and therefore they meditate Her always in their minds. Therefore the wise man, knowing this firmly, should serve in every way the Highest Śaktī. O Munis! This is the settled conclusion of all the *Śāstras*. I have heard of this great hidden secret from Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. He heard it from Nārada, and Nārada heard it from his own father Brahmā. Brahmā heard this from Viṣṇu. O Munis, it is well that the wise even should not hear or think anything to the contrary from other sources; they should with their concentrated heart serve the Brahmā Sanātanī Śaktī. It is clearly witnessed in this world that if there be any substance wherein this conscious Śaktī does not exist, that becomes inert, quite useless for any purpose. So know this fully that it is the Highest Divine Mother of the Universe that is playing here, residing in every being.

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the first Skandha on deciding who is to be worshipped in the Mahāpurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—the killing of Madhu & Kaitabha

1-49. Sūta said: O Munis! When the excellent *tāmasi-śakti*, the Goddess presiding over sleep came out from the eyes, mouth, nose, heart, etc., of the body of the World-Guru Viṣṇu and rested in the celestial space, then the powerful Lord Viṣṇu began to yawn and got up. He saw the Prajāpati Brahmā, terrified and spoke to him in words, deep like rumbling in the clouds: "O Bhagavān Padmayone! What makes you come here, and leave your *tapasyā?* Why do you look so terrified and anxious?"

Hearing this, Brahmā said: "O Deva! The two very powerful and very terrible Daityas, Madhu Kaitabha sprung from the wax of Thy ears approached to kill me; terrified thus, I have come to Thee. So, O Lord of the Universe! O Vāsudeva! now I am quite out of senses and terrified; save me."

Viṣṇu then said: "Now go and rest in peace, without any fear; let those two stupids, whose life has been well nigh exhausted, come to me for battle; I will certainly kill them."

Sūta said: "While Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the Lord of all the Devas, was thus saying, those two very powerful Dānavas, elated with pride, came up there, in their search for Brahmā. O Munis! The two proud Daityas stood there in the midst of the *pralaya* water without anything to stand on and with calm attitude. They then spoke to Brahmā as follows:

'O You have fled and come here? You cannot escape. Go on and fight. I will kill You before this one. Then I will kill him also who sleeps on this bed of serpent. Either give us battle or acknowledge yourself as our servant.'

Hearing their words, Janārdan Viṣṇu addressed them as follows: 'O two Dānavas, mad for war! Come and fight with Me as you like; I will surely curb your pride. O two powerful ones! If you trust Me, come and fight.'

Hearing this, the two Dānavas in the midst of that mass of water resting without any support, came up there to fight, with their eyes rolling with anger. The Daitya named Madhu became very angry, came up quickly to fight while Kaitabha remained where he stood. Then the hand-to-hand fight ensued between the two mad athletes; Bhagavān Hari and Madhu became tired; Kaitabha came up and began to fight. After that Madhu and Kaitabha joined and, blind with rage, began to fight again and again hand-to-hand with the very powerful Viṣṇu. And Bhagavān Brahmā and the Prime Force *ādyā-śakti* witnessed this from the celestial Heavens. So the fight lasted for a long, long time; yet the two Dānavas did not feel a bit tired: rather Bhagavān Viṣṇu became tired. Thus five thousand years passed away; Hari then began to ponder over their mode of death. He thought: 'I fought for five thousands of years but the two formidable Dānavas have not been tired anything, rather I am tired; it is a matter of great surprise. Where has gone my prowess? and what for the two Dānavas were not tired; What is the cause? This is a matter, now, seriously to be thought over.'

Seeing Bhagavān Hari thus sunk in cares, the two haughty Dānavas spoke to him with great glee and with a voice like that of the rumbling of cloud: 'O Viṣṇu ! If you feel tired, if you have no sufficient strength to fight with us, then raise your folded palms on your head and acknowledge that you are our servant; or if you can, go on fighting. O intelligent one! We will take away your life first; and then slay this four-faced Brahmā.'

Hearing the words of the two Dānavas, resting there without any support in the vast ocean, the high-minded Viṣṇu spoke to them in sweet consoling words: 'See, O heroes! no one ever fights with one who is tired, afraid, who is weaponless, who is fallen or who is a child; this is the *dharma* of heroes. Both of you fought with me for five thousands of years. But I am single-

handed; you are two, both equally powerful and both of you took rest at intervals. I will therefore take rest for a while, and then fight with certainty. Both of you are very powerful and very much elated in vanity. Therefore rest a while. After taking rest for a while I will fight with you according to the just rules of warfare.' Hearing these words of Hari, the two chief Dānavas trusted and remained far aloof, ready to fight again.

Now the four-armed Vāsudeva, seeing them at a sufficient distance, began to ponder in his mind thus: 'How their death can be effected?' Thinking for a time, he came to know that they have been granted, by the Supreme śakti Devī, death at their will (*icchāmrityu*); and therefore they are not getting tired. I fought so long with them uselessly; my labor went in vain. How then can I now fight, with this certain knowledge. Again if I do not fight, how these two Dānavas, elated with their boon and giving troubles to all, be destroyed? When the boon is granted by the Devī their death is also well nigh impracticable. Who wants his own death, even placed in very great distressed circumstances? Attacked by terrible diseases, reduced to indigent poverty no one wants to die; so how can it be expected that these two haughty Dānavas would want their death themselves? Therefore it is advisable me to take refuge of that *ādyā-śakti*, the giver of the fruits of all desires. No desires can ever be fructified unless She is thoroughly pleased. Thus thinking, Bhagavān Viṣṇu saw the beautiful Devī Yoga-Nidra Śivā, shining in the air. Then the supreme *yogī*, Bhagavān Viṣṇu, of immeasurable spirit began to praise with folded palms that great Bhuvaneśvarī Mahā-Kālī, the giver of boons, for the destruction of the Dānavas.

'O Devī! I bow down to Thee O Mahā-māyā, the Creatrix and Destructrix! Thou beginningless and deathless! O auspicious Caṇḍīke! The Bestower of enjoyment and liberation, I do not know Thy *saguṇa* or *nirguṇa* forms; how then can I know Thy glorious deeds, innumerable as they are. Today Thy indescribable prowess has been experienced by Me, I being made senseless and unconscious by Thy power of sleep. Being tried again and again by Brahmā with great care to bring me back to my consciousness, I could not

become conscious, so much my senses were contracted down. O Mother! By Thy power, Thou didst keep me unconscious and Thou again hast freed me from sleep, and I also fought so many times. O giver of one's honor! Now I am tired; but Thou hast granted boon to the two Dānavas and therefore they are not getting tired. These two Dānavas, puffed up with pride, were ready to kill Brahmā; and therefore I challenged them to fight with Me and they too are fighting fiercely with Me in this vast ocean. But Thou hast granted them the wonderful boon that they will die whenever they will; and therefore I have now come to Thy refuge, as Thou protectest those that come under Thy shelter. Therefore, O Mother, the remover of the Devaś troubles! These two Dānavas are become exceedingly elated by Thy boon and I, too, am tired. Therefore dost Thou help me now. See! those two sinners are ready to kill me; without Thy grace, what can I do now? and where to go?'

50-59. Thus praised by the eternal Vāsudeva Jagannātha Hari, with humility and *praṇāmas*, the Devī Mahā-Kāli, resting in the air, said smiling: 'O Devadeva Hari! Fight again; O Viṣṇu! These two heroes, when deluded by My Māyā, would be slain by you; I will delude them certainly, by My sidelong glance; O Nārāyaṇa! then slay quickly the two Dānavas, when conjured by My Māyā.'

Sūta said: "Hearing these loving words of Bhagavatī, Bhagavān Viṣṇu went to the scene of battle in the middle of that ocean, when the two powerful Dānavas of serene tempers and eager to fight, became very glad on seeing Viṣṇu in the battle and said: 'O four-armed one! we see your desire is very lofty indeed; well stand! Stand! now be ready for battle, knowing that victory or defeat is surely dependent on Destiny. You should think now thus: Though it is generally true that the more powerful one wins victory; but it also happens sometimes that the weak gets the victory by queer turn of Fate; so the high-souled persons should not be glad at their victories, nor should express their sorrows at their defeat; so don't be glad, thinking, that you on many former occasions fought with many Dānavas who were your

enemies, and got the victory; nor be sorry that now you are defeated by the two Dānavas.'

Thus saying, the powerful Madhu Kaitabha came up to fight. Seeing this, Bhagavān Viṣṇu struck them immediately by fist with great violence; the two Dānavas, elated with their strength, struck Hari in return with their fists. Thus fighting went on vigorously.

60-87. Now seeing the two Dānavas of great powers, fighting on incessantly, Nārāyaṇa Hari cast a glance expressive of great distress, towards the face of the Devī Mahākāli. Seeing Viṣṇu thus distressed, the Devī laughed loudly and began to look constantly with eyes somewhat reddish and shot towards the two Asuras sidelong glances of love and amorous feelings which were like arrows from the Cupid. The two vicious Daityas became fascinated by the sidelong glances of the Devī and took great pleasure in them; being extremely agitated by these amorous darts, looked with one steady gaze towards the Devī, of spotless luster. Bhagavān Hari, too, saw the wonderful enchanting pastime of the Devī. Then Hari, perfectly expert in adopting means to secure ends, began to speak smiling and in voice like that of the rambling cloud, knowing the two Dānavas enchanted by Mahā-māyā, thus:

'O two heroes! I am very glad at the mode of your fighting. So ask from me boons. I will grant that to you. I saw many Dānavas before, fighting; but never I saw them expert like you, nor I heard like this. I am therefore, very much satisfied by your such unrivalled powers. Therefore, O greatly powerful pair of Dānavas! I wish to grant both of you any boon that you want.'

Seeing the Devī Mahā-māyā, the gladdener, of the Universe, the two Dānavas felt themselves amorous; and therefore they became proud on hearing Viṣṇu's those words and told Viṣṇu, with their lotus-like eyes wide open, thus:

’O Hari! what do you like to give us? We are not beggars; we do not want anything from you. O Lord of the Devas! Rather we will give You whatever You desire; we are donors; not receivers. So O Vāsudeva! Hṛṣīkeśa! We are glad to see Your wonderful fight; so ask from us any boon that You desire.’

Hearing their words, Bhagavān Janārdan said: ’If you both are so much pleased with Me, then I want this that both of you be killed by Me.” Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, Madhu Kaitabha became very much bewildered, thinking ’We are now cheated,’ remained for some time merged in sorrow.

Then reflecting that there is water everywhere and solid earth nowhere, they said: ’O Janārdana Hari! We know that you are truthful; therefore now we want this desired boon from you that you wanted to grant us before now grant us this desired boon of ours. O Madhusūdana! We will be slain by you; but kill us, O Mādhava! on a solid earth, free from any water; and thus keep your word.’

Śrī Bhagavān Hari laughed and remembering His Sudarśana disc said: ’O two highly fortunate ones! Verily, I will kill both of you on the vast solid spot without any trace of water.’ Thus saying, the Devadeva Hari expanded His own thighs and showed to those Dānavas the vast solid earth on the surface of water and said: ’O two Dānavas! See, here is no water. Place your two heads here; thus I will keep my word and you would keep your word.’

Hearing this, Madhu Kaitabha thought over in their minds and expanded their bodies to ten thousand Yojanas. Bhagavān Viṣṇu Hari also extended his thighs to twice that amount. Seeing this, they were greatly, suprised and laid their heads on the thighs of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu of wonderful prowess, then cut off quickly with His Sudarśana disc the two very big heads over His thighs. Thus the two Dānavas Madhu Kaitabha passed away; and the marrow (*meda*) of them filled the ocean. O Munis! For this reason, this earth is named Medinī and the earth is unfit for eatable purpose.

Thus I have described to you all that you asked. The sum and substance is this that the wise persons should serve Mahā-māyā with all their hearts. The Supreme Śakti is worshipped by all the Devas. Verily verily, I say unto you that this is decided, in all the *Vedas* and other *śastras* that there is nothing higher than this *ādyā-śakti*. Therefore this Supreme Śakti should be worshipped anyhow; either in Her *saguṇa* form or in Her *nirguṇa* state.

Thus ends the ninth Chapter of the first Skandha on the killing of Madhu Kaitabha in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Śiva grants boons

1-37. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! You told before, that Vyāsadeva, unrivalled spirit, composed all the *Purāṇas* and taught them to his own Śukadeva; but how did Vyāsadeva, who was incessantly engaged in *tapasyā*, procreate Śuka? Describe to us in detail what you heard direct from Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa."

Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Hear how Śukadeva, the best of the Munis and the foremost of the *yogīs*, was born of Vyāsadeva, Satyavatī's son.

On the very beautiful summit of Mount Meru, Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, firmly determined, practiced very severe austerities for the attainment of a son. Having heard from Nārada, he, the great ascetic, repeated the one-syllable *mantra* of Vāgdevi (*aiṁ*) and worshipped the Highest Mahāmayā with the object of getting a son. He asked, 'Let a son be born to me as pure and as spirited and powerful as fire, air, earth, and *ākāśa*.' He thought over in his mind that: 'The man possessed of Śakti is worshipped in this world and the man devoid of Śakti is censured here,' and thus came to the conclusion that 'Śakti is therefore worshipped everywhere.' And therefore worshipped Bhagavān Maheśvara coupled with the auspicious *ādyā-śakti,* and spent away one hundred years without any food. He began his *tapasyā* on that mountain summit which was ornamented with the garden of

Karnikār, where all the Devas play, and where live the Munis highly ascetic, the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Maruts, the two Aśvīns, and the other mindful Ṛṣis, the knowers of Brahmā and where the Kinnaras always resound the air with their songs of music, etc.; such a place Vyāsadeva preferred for his *tapasyā*.

The whole universe was pervaded with the spirit of asceticism of the intelligent Parāsara's son Vyāsadeva; and the hairs of his head were matted and looked tawny, of the color of flames. Seeing the fire of his asceticism, Indra, the lord of Śaci became exceedingly terrified. Bhagavān Rudra, seeing Indra thus afraid, fatigued and morose, asked him: 'O Indra, why do you look so fear-stricken today? O Lord of the Devas! What is the cause of your grief? Never show your jealousy and anger to the ascetics; for the mindful ascetics always practice severe asceticism with a noble object and worship Me, knowing Me to be possessed of the all-powerful Śakti; they never want ill of anybody.'

When Bhagavān Rudra said this, Indra asked him: 'What is his object?' At this Śaṅkara said: 'For the attainment of a son, Parāsara's son is practicing such severe austerities; now one-hundred years is being completed; I will go to him, and give him today the auspicious boon of a son.' Thus speaking to Indra, Bhagavān Rudra, the Guru of the world, went to Vyāsadeva and, with merciful eyes, said: 'O sinless Vāsavi's son! Get up; I grant to you the boon, that you will get a son—very fiery, luminous and spirited like the five elements fire, air, earth, water and *ākāśa*, the supreme *jñāṇī*, the store of all auspicious qualities, of great renown, beloved to all, ornamented with all *sāttvik* qualities, truthful and valorous.'

Hearing these sweet words of Bhagavān Śūlapāni, Maharṣi Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana bowed down to Him and went back to his own hermitage. Tired with the labor of penance for many years, he wanted to kindle fire by rubbing two fuels (*aranī*) with each other. While doing this the high-souled man suddenly began to think strongly in his mind about procreating a son. He thought:

’Will it be that my son will be born as this fire is produced by the friction of the two churning sticks? I have not got the wife, which the Paṇḍitas designate a *putrārāṇī*, the youthful wife endowed with beauty, born of a noble family, the chaste one I have not got with me. But the wife, though chaste and fit to beget a son, is undoubtedly a chain to both the legs, so how can I get such a one for my wife? This is known to all, that a chaste wife, though clever in doing all household duties, beautiful and giving happiness to one’s desires, is yet always a sort of bondage. What more than this, that the ever-fortunate Bhagavān Maheśvara is yet always under the bondage of woman. How, then, knowing and hearing all this, I can accept this difficult householder’s life?’

While he was thinking thus, the extraordinarily beautiful Apsarā Ghritāchi fell to his sight close to him in the celestial air. Though Vyāsadeva was a *brahmacārī* (holding in control the secret power of generation) of a very high order, yet seeing suddenly the agile Apsarā (a celestial nymph) coming close to him and looking askance at him, he became soon smitten with the arrows of cupid and feeling himself distressed, began to think ’What shall I do in this critical moment? Unbearable amorous feelings now have come over me; now if I take this celestial nymph, knowing that *dharma* is everywhere looking, and woman has come to take away my precious fire of spirit acquired by my *tapasyā*, then I will be laughed at by the high-souled ascetic Munis, who will think that I have lost my senses altogether. Alas! Why I who have practiced for one hundred years the most terrible ascetism, have become so powerless by the mere sight of this Apsarā! The Paṇḍitas declare the household life as the source of getting son, one’s heart’s desire and the source of all happiness; so much so that it leads all the virtuous souls to the pleasures of Heaven, and ordains *mokṣa* (liberation) to the *jñāṇīs*; and if I get such unrivalled happiness from this householder’s life, I can have this Deva Kanyā (the celestial nymph) though blameable. But again that happiness will not occur to me through her; there is no doubt about this. So how can I take her? I heard from Nārada how, in ancient days, a king name Pururavā fell under the clutches of Urvaśī and ultimately felt great pain, being defeated by her.’

Thus ends the tenth chapter on Śiva's granting boon in the Mahāpurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—the birth of Budha

1-86. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! Who is that King Pururavā? and who is the Deva girl Urvaśī? And how did that high-souled King Pururavā come into trouble? O son of Romaharṣaṇa! Kindly describe now all these to us. We are now desirous to hear sweet words from the lotus of your mouth. O Sūta! Your words are sweeter and more full of juice than nectar even; so we are not satiated by hearing them, as gods are not satiated with the drink of nectar."

Hearing this Sūta said: "O Munis! I am now telling you, as far as my intelligence goes, what I heard from the mouth of Śrī Vyāsa. Now hear that beautiful divine incident.

Once on a time the exceedingly beautiful dear wife of Bṛhaspati, named Tārā, full of youth and beauty, of the most beautiful limbs and intoxicated with pride, went to the house of Chandra Deva (the Moon), the *yajamān* (Employer of priest Bṛhaspati at any sacrifice) of Bṛhaspati. Seeing Tārā of beautiful moonlike face, the Moon became very passionate; Tārā also felt amorous at the sight of Moon. Thus both of them became very much passionately attached to each other. Then they, the Moon and Tārā, being smitten by the arrows of Cupid and intoxicated with amorous passions, began their sexual intercourse with reciprocal feelings of passionate love. Some days passed in this state. Bṛhaspati, then, being distressed with the pang of separation from his wife, sent his pupil to bring back Tārā; but Tārā was then submissive of Chandra and therefore refused to come. Bṛhaspati sent over and over again his pupil and when Chandra Deva returned the messenger, Bṛhaspati became very angry and went personally to Chandra's house and spoke angrily to the Moon who was puffed up with arrogance and somewhat smiling—'O Moon! Why are you committing this vicious act, contrary to *dharma?* Why are you keeping my

beautiful wife in your house? I am your *guru;* you are my client; O stupid! why are you enjoying your *guru's* wife and keeping her in custody in your house? Do you not know that he who kills a Brahmāṇa, who steals gold, who drinks, who goes to wife of one's *guru* are *mahāpātakis* (great sinners) and those who keep company of these are the fifth *mahāpātakis?* Therefore if you had enjoyed my wife, you are exceedingly vicious, blameable and a *mahāpātaki* (great sinner); you are not fit to live amongst the Devas. O wicked one! Now I say that even now you better forsake Tārā, who is of a blue color and whose look is askance; I won't go from here without having Tārā. And if you do not give back Tārā, then you are certainly with her and undoubtedly I will curse you.'

When Bṛhaspati said so, Chandra, the husband of Rohinī, spoke to his *gurudeva*, who was very angry, sorry and afflicted at the separation from his beloved wife, thus: 'In this world, the Brahmāṇas that know the *dharma-śāstras*, that are devoid of anger, are fit to be worshipped; and those that are not so, they are objects of disrespect and not to be worshipped by all for their anger. O sinless one! The beautiful one will surely go to your house; what harm is there to you, if she waits here for a few days?

She is staying here of her own accord to enjoy pleasures and will go back of her own will. One word more—you gave out before this opinion of the *dharma-śāstras* that as a Brahmāṇa though guilty of committing vicious deeds, becomes pure again by the practice of *karmas* as enjoined in the *Vedas*; so a woman, too, though guilty of adultery, becomes pure again when she is again in the period of her menstruation.'

At these words of Chandra Deva, Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the Devas, became exceedingly sorry and anxious and went back immediately to his own house, with a grievous heart full of amorous feelings. After staying in his own house for some days Bṛhaspati, worn out with anxiety, came again quickly to the house of Chandra; but, no sooner he was to enter the gate, he was stopped by the doorkeepers; he became very angry and stopped at the gateway. And when he saw that Chandra did not make his appearance, he

became exceedingly angry and thought: 'Oh! What a wonder is this? This irreligious Chandra, being my disciple, has done this vicious act and took by violence the wife of his *guru*, who is reckoned as the mother; and I will now teach him a good lesson.'

Standing on the entrance gateway Bṛhaspati began to speak aloud: 'O stupid, vicious, vilest of the Devas! Why do you now sleep in your inner room? Do return quickly my wife; else I will curse you at once. In case you do not bring me back my wife at once, I will now reduce you to ashes.' Hearing these foul words of Bṛhaspati, Chandra Deva the king of the Dvijas, quickly came out of the house and said smiling: 'O Brahmāṇa! Why are you spending your stock of words for nothing? That all-auspicious lady, of a blue color and looking askance, is not fit for you; therefore take another comparatively uglier woman for your use. Exceedingly youthful and lovely woman like her is not fit for a beggar's house. O stupid one! I see, you don't know anything about the *kāma-śāstra* (the book that dwells on amorous passion); those wise men who are skilled in this *śāstra* assign for the women, their lovers equivalent to their beauty in matters of amorous dealings. So, O stupid man! go away wherever you like. I won't give you back your wife. Do whatever lies in your power. I won't return your wife. When you have become passionate, your curse won't affect me in any way. This I say finally unto you: O Guru! I will not give you back your wife; do what you wish.'

Thus spoken by Chandra, Bṛhaspati became vary anxious and angry; he then went away quickly to the Indra's house. Seeing *gurudeva* morose and sorry, the very liberal-minded Indra Deva worshipped him duly with *pādya, arghya*, and *āchamanīya* and asked: 'O highly fortunate one! Why do you look so anxious? O great Muni! Why are you grievous and sorry? You are my *guru;* is it that you are insulted by anyone in my kingdom; say freely. All the Regents of the several quarters (the *lokapālas*) and all the Deva armies are under your command. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara and other Devas are ready to lend you every assistance, no doubt. So say what is the cause of your anxiety.'

Hearing these words of Indra, Bṛhaspati said: ’Chandra has stolen my beautiful-eyed wife. I asked for her again and again, but that wicked soul is not returning me my wife at all. O Lord of the Devas! What am I to do now? You are my help and guide. O Śatakratu! You are the lord of the Devas; therefore I pray to you with a very grievous heart, help me in this matter.’

Hearing this, Indra said: ’O knower of *dharma!* Do not be sorry. O Suvrata! I am your servant. O highly intelligent one! Surely I will bring you back your wife. I will send a messenger and even then if Chandra, mad with pride, does not return your wife, I will wage war with him and fight against him, with all our Deva armies.’

Thus consoling Bṛhaspati, Indra sent a very clever man, who was a good speaker and wonderful in his capabilities, to Chandra. The clever and wise messenger went to the *candra-loka* (the region of the Moon) and spoke to Chandra, the husband of Rohinī, thus: ’O Mahābhāga! Indra has sent me to you to communicate his message to you. So O intelligent one! I will tell you what he has ordered me; hear.’ He said: ’O highly fortunate one! You know well *dharma* and *nīti-śāstra* (the science of morals); the more so, because the virtuous Maharṣi Atri is your father. Therefore, O Suvrata! You ought not to commit such a blameable act. See, all beings should protect their own wives always, without remaining idle to the best of their powers; therefore no doubt, quarrels would ensue necessarily on that point. O Sudhānidhi! as far as this point of protecting one’s wife is concerned, your *gurudeva* ought also to do his best. You ought to consider all persons like your own self.

O Sudhākara! You have got twenty-eight exceedingly beautiful wives, who are the daughters of Dakṣa; why then do you desire to enjoy the wife of your *guru?* The beautiful Apsarās (celestial nymphs) like Menakā and others are always residing in the Heavens; you can enjoy them to your heart’s content; leave off the wife of your *guru*. In case any powerful man commits an unworthy act out of egoism, the illiterate ones would follow them; so the *dharma* will decline. Therefore, O highly lucky one! Do such as

does not lead, for nothing, to quarrels amongst the gods and leave your Guru's wife, even beautiful."

Hearing these words from the messenger, the Moon (Chandra Deva) became somewhat angry and, making gestures, replied to the messenger, as if to Indra, thus: 'O mighty-armed one! As you yourself are the lord of the Devas and the knower of *dharma*, so your priest, too, has become like you; the head of both of you are the same. You will find many that can show their learning and give advice to others, but you will find always very rare such persons as will act themselves to their own advices when occasion arises and wants them to fulfil their own words. O Lord of the Devas! All the persons take the opinion of the *śāstras* framed by Bṛhaspati; then why the quarrel would ensue with me and the Devas when I an enjoying, according to his dictates, a woman who is herself willing? See also, that the rule in this world is might is right; all things go to the powerful man who can take by force; nothing falls to the lot of the weak; moreover this woman is mine and that woman is of another, this false notion comes to those whose brains are weak. When Tārā, is so much attached to me and is not at all attached to Bṛhaspati, the above rule is applicable to me all the more; how then can I quit the lady so much attached to me, according to the laws of *dharma* and the morals? You can see also, that happiness reigns in that family where the wife is according to the will of the husband; how, then, can the household happiness exist when the lady of the house is always dissatisfied? Therefore the household happiness of the *guru* is impossible, as Tārā is dissatified with Bṛhaspati since he enjoyed the wife of his younger brother Samvarta. Then the result comes to this, O thousand eyed one! How have you come to be thousand-eyed! However that may be, you are the lord of the Devas; you can do whatever you like. O messenger! go and tell your lord of the Devas all that I have spoken; I will not return by any means that beautiful Tārā.'

When Chandra spoke thus, the messenger went back to Indra and communicated to him all that Chandra Deva had spoken. Hearing this, Indra became angry and ordered all the Deva forces to be ready at once.

Hearing this news of war, Śukrācārya, out of enmity to Bṛhaspati, went to Chandra and spoke thus: "O highly intelligent one! never return Tārā; in case if war ensues between you and Indra, I will help you by my *mantra-śakti*."

On the other hand, Bhagavān Śaṅkara, hearing of the vicious act of Chandra's, taking his *guru's* wife, and knowing that Śukrācārya was the enemy of Bṛhaspati, came to the assistance of the Devas. The great war, then, ensued between the Devas like the terrific war of Tārakāsura; it continued for many years. Then the grandfather Brahmā, seeing the great havoc in the lives of the Devas and Asuras, came there on his *vāhan-haṁśa* to secure peace and talked to Chandra: 'Quit the *guru's* wife; if not, I will call Viṣṇu and destroy all of you party.' He also desisted the son of Bhṛgu, Śukrācārya, saying: 'O highly intelligent one! why has this wicked idea possessed your mind? Is it due to the bad association?' Then Śukrācārya also told Chandra, the lord of the medicinal plants, not to wage war and said: 'Better quit you now the *guru's* wife. Your father Maharṣi Atri has sent me to you for this purpose.' Chandra, then, hearing the strange words of Śukrācārya, returned to Bṛhaspati his wife Tārā, though she was not satisfied with him and became herself pregnant.

Bṛhaspati returned with joy to his house, accompanied by his wife; the Devas and Dānavas went away to their respective places. Brahmā went to Brahmaloka and Śaṅkara went to Kailāśa.

Bṛhaspati began to pass his time happily with his beautiful wife; Some days went away when the wife of Bṛhaspati, Tārā, gave birth to an all-auspicious son, having all the qualities of Chandra, on an auspicious day and under the influence of an auspicious star; seeing this new-born child, Bṛhaspati gladly performed the natal ceremonies of the child. Hearing that a son is born to him, Chandra sent a messenger to Bṛhaspati saying that 'That the child is not yours, but it is born out of the semen of mine; why, then, have you performed the natal ceremonies out of your own will?'

Hearing these words of Chandra’s messenger, Bṛhaspati said: ’No, this child is mine, no doubt, as he resembles quite like me.’ When Bṛhaspati said this, war again ensued. The Devas and Dānavas met each other again in battlefield; and councils of war were held. Then, for the preservation of peace, Prajāpati Brahmā went there; and before all desisted the Devas; and Dānavas, mad for war, and ready to fight against each other. Brahmā, then, asked Tārā: ’O auspicious one! say truly whose child is this? O beautiful one! if you say truly, then this war resulting in the loss of so many lives, will cease.’ The handsome Tārā, looking askance, lowered her head with shame and gently spoke to Brahmā: ’This is the Chandra’s child,’ and went inside. Chandra Deva, then, became very glad and took the child, put down its name as Budha and carried it, to his own house. Bhagavān Brahmā, Indra and the other Devas went back to their respective places. All the spectators went also to their own places whence they came. O Munis! I have now described the birth of Budha, as the son of Chandra and in the womb of Bṛhaspati’s wife, as I heard it from the mouth of Vyāsadeva, the son of Satyavatī.”

Thus ends the eleventh chapter of the 1st Skandha on the birth of Budha in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the birth of Pururavā

1-53. Sūta said: “O Mahārsis! The son of the above-mentioned Budha is the greatly religious Pururavā, of a very charitable disposition, and always ready to perform sacrificial acts; he was born of a *kṣatriya* woman named Ilā; and I will now describe how this Pururavā was born of Ilā and Budha, kindly listen.

In days of yore there was a king named Sudyumna, very truthful and highly capable in keeping his senses under control. Once upon a time, wearing beautiful earrings, with extraordinary bow named Ajagava and holding the quiver full of arrows on his back, he went out on hunt to a

forest, riding on a horse born of the country Sindhu, surrounded by a few of his ministers. Going about in the regions of forest, the king got for his *shikār* buck, hare, boar, rhinoceros, bison, buffalo, young elephant, Srimar deer, wild fowl and various other animals fit for sacrificial purposes; thus he went on deep into the interior of the forest. This divine forest was adorned with rows of Mandāra trees and situated at the bottom of the mount Sumeru. Various trees and flowers were spreading the beauty of the forest all around; at places were Asoka creepers, Vakula, Sāl, Tāl, Tamāl, Champak, Panasa, mango, Nīm, Madhūka, pomegranate, cocoanut, Yūthikā, plantain, Kuṇḍa creeper, and various other trees and flowers; at some other places the bowers formed of Mādhavi creepers enhanced the beauty and shed the luster all around. There were tanks and reservoirs of water in the forest filled with swans, *kārandavas*, and other aquatic birds. The bamboo trees on their banks becoming filled with air were emitting sweet musical sounds; and at many places of that all bliss-giving forest, there were bees humming sweetly and delighting the minds of people there. Now the Rājarsī Sudyumna became highly gladdened in his heart to see this interior of the forest, resonated with the cooing of the cuckoos and beautified by various lovely flowers; and no sooner he entered there than he was turned into a female and his horse, also, turned into a mare; the king, then, became seriously anxious. He began to think over and over again, 'What is this? How has this come to pass?' and became very ashamed and sorry and pondered over thus: 'What am I to do now? How can I in this woman condition go back to my house and how shall I govern my kingdom? Alas! Who has deceived me thus!'

Hearing these astounding words of Sūta, the Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! You have mentioned that the king Sudyumna equal to god has been turned into a woman; this is very strange indeed! Therefore, O Suvrata! What is the reason of his being turned into a mare? Kindly describe fully what that beautiful king did in the forest?"

Sūta, said: "Once on a time, Sanaka and other Ṛṣis went to this forest to pay a visit to Śaṅkara, illuminating the ten quarters by their holy aura. But then

Bhagavān Śaṅkara was in amorous dealings with Śankarī. The beautiful Devī Ambikā was then naked and sitting on the lap of Śaṅkara, and therefore became very much ashamed at their sight; She got up hurriedly, and putting on her cloth, remained there shuddering, with great shame and sensitiveness. The Ṛṣis, also, seeing them engaged in amorous dealings, went away quickly to the hermitage of Nara-Nārāyaṇa.

Then Bhagavān Śaṅkara, seeing Śankari too much sensitive, said: 'Why are you so much bashful and shy? I am doing just now what will give you pleasure. O Beautiful one! Whoever male will enter from today and hereafter, within the precincts of this forest, will be instantly converted into a woman.' O Munis! Though the forest gave all delights to all, yet, having this defect, all the persons that know of this curse, carefully avoid the forest. No sooner did the King Sudyumna enter into the forest, out of ignorance, than he, as well as his attendants, were instantly turned into women; there could be no doubt about this. The king became overpowered with great care and anxiety and did not go back, out of shame, to his palace; but he began to wander to and fro on the outskirts of that forest. He became known afterwards as the woman Ilā. Now, once on an occasion, Budha, while he was wandering at his will, came up there and seeing the beautiful Ilā with gestures and pastures and surrounded by women, became passionately attached towards her; and Ilā, too, seeing the beautiful Budha, the son of Chandra Deva, became desirous to have him as her husband. They became so very much tied in love towards each other, that intercourse took place there. Thus Bhagavān Budha generated, in the womb of Ilā, Pururavā; and Ilā gave birth, in due time, the son Pururavā in that forest. She then, with an anxious heart, recollected while in the forest, her (rather his), family priest Vasiṣṭha Deva.

Now Vasiṣṭha Deva, seeing the distressed condition of the king Sudyumna became affected with pity and pleased Mahādeva, Śaṅkara, the most auspicious Deva of all, by hymns and praises. When Bhagavān Śaṅkara wanted to grant him the boon that he desired, Vasiṣṭha Deva wanted that the king would be turned again into man as before. At this Bhagavān

Śaṅkara said, in recognition of His promise, that the king Sudyumna would be alternately one month a man and the second month a woman and so on. Thus, by the favor of Vasiṣṭha Deva, the king Sudyumna got this boon and returned to his kingdom and began to govern it. When he used to be turned into a woman, he used to remain in the interior, and when he used to become a man, he governed his kingdom. At this the subjects became very anxious and did not welcome the king as they used to do before. Some days passed away in this way when the prince Pururavā grew up into manhood. Then the king Sudyumna gave over to him the kingdom and made him the king of the new capital named Pratisthān; and started out to an hermitage to perform *tapasyā*. He went to a beautiful forest, variegated with all sorts of trees, and got from the Devarṣi Nārada the excellent *mantra* of the Bhagavatī Devī, consisting of nine letters. He began to repeat it incessantly, with an heart filled with love. Thus some days passed away when the all-auspicious Devī Bhagavatī, the Savior of the whole Universe, became pleased with the king and appeared before the him, assuming a divine beautiful form, composed of attributes, intoxicated with drink, and with eyes rolling with pride, and riding on the Lion *vāhana*.

Seeing this divine form of the Mother of the Universe, the king Ilā (in this form) bowed down before Her with eyes filled with love and gladly praised Her with hymns thus: 'O Bhagavatī! What a fortunate being I am! That I have seen today the extraordinary world-renowned benign form of Thine granting grace and benefit to all the *lokas*, I, therefore, bow down to Thy lotus feet, granting desires and liberation, and served by the whole host of the Devas. O Mother! What mortal is there on this earth, who can fully comprehend Thy glories when all the Devas and Munis get bewildered in trying to know of them?

O Devī! I am thoroughly astonished to see Thy glories and Thy compassion towards the distressed, poor and helpless people. How can a human being, who is devoid of attributes comprehend Thy attributes when Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra, Chandra (moon), Pavana (wind), Sūrya, Kuvera, and the eight Vasus know not Thy powers. O Mother! Bhagavān Viṣṇu, of

unrivalled brilliancy, knows Thee as a part of Thine only, as Kamalā of *sattva-guṇa* and giving one all one's desires; Bhagavān Brahmā knows Thy part only as the form made of *rajo-guṇa,* and Bhagavān Śaṅkara knows Thee as Umā only made of *tamo-guṇa;* but, O Mother! none of them knows Thy *turīya* form, transcending all the *guṇas*.

O Mother! where is my humble self, that is of very dull intellect and powerless, and where is Thy extremely propitious serenity and graciousness? Indeed such a gracious favor on me is certainly beyond expectation. Therefore, O Bhavānī! I have come to realize, in particular, that Thy heart is full of unbounded mercy; for Thou dost certainly feel compassion for these Bhaktas that are full of Bhakti towards Thee. O Mother! what more shall I say than this, that Bhagavān Madhusūdana Viṣṇu, though married to Kamalā, born from only a part of Thine, considers Himself unfit of Her and is therefore not happy; then the fact that He, the ādi-Puruṣa gets his feet shampooed by Kamalā merely corroborates the fact that He wants His feet to become pure and all-auspicious to the world by the holy touch of Kamalā's hands. O Mother! It seems to me that the ancient Puruṣa Bhagavān Viṣṇu wants gladly to be kicked by Thee like the Aśoka tree, for his own improvement and pleasure; and therefore it is that Thou dost want, as if Thou hast become angry to kick Thy husband, stricken by Smara (cupid, love) and worshipped by all the Devas, who lies prostrate below Thy feet.

O Devī; when Thou always residest on the calm broad chest, as if on a great cot, adorned beautifully of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, as lightning in deep dense blue clouds, then it is without doubt that He, becoming the Lord of the Universe, has surely become Thy *vāhan* (vehicle) on account of carrying Thee on His breast, O Mother! If Thou forsakest Madhusūdana out of wrath, He becomes at once powerless and is not worshipped by anybody; for it is seen everywhere that persons, though calm and serene, if devoid of Śrī (wealth and power) are forsaken by their relatives as reduced to a state having no qualities. O Mother! I am not to be ignored by Thee, on account of my being a woman, for was it not the fact that Brahmā and the other

Devas who always take shelter of Thy lotus feet had not all to assume once youthful feminine forms while in Maṇidvīpa? And I know this surely that Thou again didst make them of male forms.

Therefore, O Thou of unbounded power! What shall I describe about Thy power? Indeed, there is great doubt in my mind whether Thou art masculine or feminine. O Devī! Whoever Thou mayst be, whether with attributes on transcending the attributes, whether male or female, I always bow down to Thee, with heart full of devotion towards Thee. O Mother! I want that I may have one unflinching devotion, towards Thee in my final state.'

Sūta said: "Thus praising the Devī, the king Sudyumna, in the form of the feminine Ilā, took refuge of the World Mother; and the Devī, becoming greatly pleased, gave to the king, then and there, union with Her own Self. Thus the king got the highest steady place, so very rare even to the Munis, by the grace of the Prime Force, the Devī Brahmāmayī."

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter of the first Skandha on the birth of Pururavā, in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—Urvaśī and Pururavā

1-34. Sūta said: "O Maharṣis! When the king Sudyumna had gone up to heavens, the religious king Pururavā, endowed with great beauty and many qualities, and able to please the minds of his subjects began to govern his kingdom well according to *dharma*, with his heart intent on governing his people. Nobody knew what his counsel was, but he was very clever in knowing others' counsels. He was always highly energetic and his lordly power was great. The four methods of warfare—conciliation, giving gifts, sowing dissensions and war—were fully under his control. He saw that his subjects practiced religion according to *varṇāśrama-dharma*

(occupational duties and stages of life), and thus he began to govern his kingdom.

Pururavā, the lord of men, performed various sacrifices with abundance of *dakṣiṇa* (sacrificial fees) and also gave away much in various charities, causing great wonder and astonishment. His extraordinary beauty and qualities, liberality and good nature, his unbounded wealth and prowess made the Apsarā Urvaśī (celestial nymph) think of him often, and she wanted him to satisfy her. Some time passed when that proud Urvaśī had to descend on this earth, due to a curse pronounced on her by a Brahmāṇa; and she chose the king Pururavā as her husband, thinking him to be endowed with all good qualities. She then addressed the king and made the following contract: 'O king, giving due honor to everybody! I keep these two young sheep in trust and deposit with you; kindly look after these, and then my honor will be preserved by you. O king! I will take ghee daily and nothing else for my food; and there is one word more; O king! Let me not see you naked, except when you hold sexual intercourse. O king I say this truly, that, in case there be any breach in this contract I will instantly leave you and go away.'

The king accepted this contract of Urvaśī. Urvaśī, too, remained there according to the above contract and also with a view to pass away the period of her curse. During this time the king was fascinated with the love of Urvaśī and became so very much attached to her, that he left all his duties and *dharma* and remained long for many, many years in enjoying Urvaśī. The king's mind was so deeply absorbed in her that he could not remain alone without her, even for a moment. Thus many years passed away, when once on a time Indra, the lord of the Devas, not seeing Urvaśī, asked the Gandharvas and said: 'O Gandharvas! Better go and steal away the two young sheep in a proper time from the palace of Pururavā, and then bring Urvaśī here. My Nandana garden is now void of all beauty without Urvaśī; so bring the lady here somehow or other.'

Thus spoken by Indra, Viśvāvasu and other Devas went to Pururavā's palace; and when it was dark in the night, and when Pururavā was holding sexual intercourse with Urvaśī, stole away the two young sheep. They, when being carried away in the sky, cried out so piteously that Urvaśī came to hear that as if of her two sons, and angrily spoke to the king: 'O king! Now the contract that I made with you is verily fulfilled! It is that I placed my implicit confidence on you that this my misfortune has befallen on me; See! the thieves are stealing away the two sheep, my sons as they were! How then are you sleeping here like a woman? Alas! I am ruined in having an impotent husband who vainly boasts of his prowess! Where are my two young sheep today that are dearer to me than my life?'

Thus seeing Urvaśī wailing, the king Pururavā, the lord of the Universe, ran after the Gandharvas instantly without any sense as it were, left in him, naked. The Gandharvas, then, cast rays of lightning in that room, and Urvaśī, willing to leave, saw the king naked when the Gandharvas left the two young sheep there and went away. The tired king brought the two sheep back to his house in that naked state. Then Urvaśī, too, seeing the husband naked, went away immediately to the Devī-loka. Seeing Urvaśī going away, the king wailed very much with a very grievous heart. Then, being very much bewildered by the bereavement of Urvaśī, with his senses beyond control, and deluded by passion, wandered about in various countries, crying and giving vent to sorrow. Thus, wandering all over the globe, he came once to Kurukṣetra and saw Urvaśī; then with a gladdened face said: 'O Beloved! Wait, wait for a moment; my mind is all absorbed in you; it is quite innocent and submissive to you. So you ought not to forsake me in such a dire difficult time. O Devī! For the sake of you, I have travelled very far. O Beautiful one! The body that you embraced before, will now, forsaken by you, fall here and will be devoured by crows and wolves, and other carnivorous animals.'

Seeing the king, tired and passion stricken, greatly distressed and with a very sorrowful heart and wailing, Urvaśī spoke out: 'O king! You are certainly a quite senseless man; whither has gone your extraordinary

knowledge now? O king! Do you not know that the pure unalloyed love of women cannot take place with any other, as the love of a wolf cannot fall on any man. Therefore the earthly men ought never to trust women and thieves. So go back to your palace and enjoy the pleasures of the kingdom; do not drown your mind further in sorrows.'

The king Pururavā, though thus brought to senses by Urvaśī, was so much fascinated by her love that his heart did not feel any consolation; rather he felt indescribable pain, being held up in bondage by the love of Urvaśī. O Munis! Thus I have described to you the character of Urvaśī; it is described in detail in the *Vedas;* I have stated this in brief."

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter of the 1st Skandha of the characters Urvaśī and Pururavā; in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—birth of Śūkadeva

1-70. Sūta said: "O Maharṣis! Now hear the main topic. Seeing the dark-blue lady looking askance at him, Vyāsadeva thought: 'Indeed! What is to be done now? This Devakanyā Apsarā Ghṛtācī is not fit for my household.' Then, seeing Vyāsadeva thus thoughtful, the Apsarā thought that the Muni might curse her and got terrified. Confounded by terror, she assumed the form of a *śūka* bird and fled away; Vyāsa, too, became greatly surprised to see her in the form of a bird. The moment Vyāsa saw the extraordinary beautiful form of Ghṛtācī, Cupid entered into his body, his mind was filled with the thought of sweet feminine form and was gladdened, and all his body was thrilled with pleasure so that the hairs of the body stood on end. The Muni Vyāsadeva tried his best and exerted his power of patience to its utmost, but failed to control his restless mind to enjoy the woman. Though he was very energetic, and he tried repeatedly to control his heart, enchanted with the beautiful form of Ghṛtācī, yet he could not, due to a state of things preordained by God, control his mind.

At this state, when he was rubbing the fire sticks to get the sacred fire, the two pieces of wood used in kindling the fire, his seed (semen) fell upon the Aranī (the two pieces of wood used in kindling the sacred fire). But he did not take any notice of that, and he went on rubbing the firesticks. Then arose from that Aranī the wonderfully beautiful form of Śūkadeva, looking like a second Vyāsa. This boy, born of Aranī fuel, looked there brilliant like the blazing fire of the sacrificial place, whereon oblations of ghee are poured.

Seeing that son,Vyāsadeva was struck with great wonder and thought thus: 'What is this? How is it that my son is born without any woman.' Thinking for a while, he came to the conclusion, that this had certainly come to pass as the result of the boon granted to him by Śiva. No sooner the fiery Śūkadeva, was born of Aranī, he looked brilliant, like fire, by his own *tejas* (spiritual prowess). At that time Vyāsadeva began to look with one steady gaze the blissful form of his son as a second Gārhapatya Fire, brilliant with the Divine fire. O hermits! The river Ganges came there from the Himalayas and washed all the inner nerves of the child Śūkadeva by her holy waters, and showers of flowers were poured on his head.

Vyāsadeva next performed all the natal ceremonies of the high-souled child; the celestial drums were sounded, the celestial nymphs began to dance and the lords of the Gandharvas Visvāvasu, Nārada, Tumburu and others began to sing with great joy for the sight of the son. All the Devas and Vidyādharas began to chant hymns with gladdened hearts at the sight of the Divine form, the son of Vyāsa, born of Aranī. O twice-born ones! Then were dropped down from the sky the divine rod (*daṇḍa*), *kamaṇḍalu* and antelope skin. No sooner the extraordinarily brilliant Śūkadeva was born than he grew up; and Vyāsadeva, who is master of endless learning and how to impart them to others, performed the son's Upanayana ceremony. No sooner the child was born than all the *Vedas*, with all their secrets and epitomes began to flash in the mind of Śūkadeva, as it reigned in Vyāsadeva.

O Munis! Bhagavān Vyāsadeva gave the name of the child as Śūka, as during the moment of his birth he saw the form of Ghṛtācī in the form of the *śūka* bird. Śūka then accepted Bṛhaspati as his *guru* and began devotedly, with his whole head and heart, to perform duly the Brahmacarya vow (the life of studentship and celebacy). The Muni Śūka remained in the house of his *guru,* and studied the four *Vedas* with their secrets and epitomes, and all the other *dharma-śāstras* and gave *dakṣiṇa* to the *guru* duly according to proper rules, and then returned home to his father Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana.

Seeing his son Śūka, Vyāsadeva got up and received him with great love and honor, and embraced him and took the smell of his head. The holy Vyāsa asked about his welfare and about his studies and requested him to stay in that auspicious *āśrama*. Vyāsa then thought of Śūka's marriage, and he became anxious and began to enquire where a beautiful girl of a Muni can be found. And he spoke to his son: 'O highly intelligent one! You have now studied all the *Vedas* and *dharma-śāstras*. Therefore, O sinless one! better marry now. O son! Take a beautiful wife, and leading a householder's life, worship the Devas and *pitṛs*, and free me from debt. There is no other way of issueless persons; he can never go to heaven; so, O highly fortunate son of mine! Now enter into the life of a householder and make me happy. O highly intelligent one! I have big expectations from you; now try to fulfill them. O greatly wise Śūka! After a very severe asceticism, I have got you who are verily a Deva born without any womb. I am, therefore, your father; save me.'

When Vyāsa spoke thus to Śūka, making him sit close by, the highly dispassionate Śūka at once made out that his father was terribly attached to the world and replied: 'O knower of *dharma!* you have, by the power of your great intelligence, divided *Veda* into four parts; why are you therefore advising me so now? I am your disciple; so give me true advice. Certainly I will obey your order.'

At this Vyāsadeva said: 'O son! I have got you after I had performed very severe *tapasyā* for one hundred years, and worshipped Bhagavān Śaṅkara for the sole object of having you. O highly wise one! I will ask some king and will give you sufficient wealth for your family expenses. So that you, having attained this much desired youth, enjoy the householder's life.'

Hearing these words of the father, Śūkadeva said: 'O father! Kindly say this to me what pleasure is there in this earth that is not mixed with pain. The happiness that is mixed with pain, is not called happiness by the wise. O highly fortunate one! when I will marry, I will become certainly submissive to that woman; see then how happiness can be possible to one who is dependent; especially to one dependent on one's wife. Rather, freedom can be obtained one day when one is tied to an iron or wooden pillar; but never freedom will come to that man who is tied by his wife and children. As the body of man is full of urine and faeces, so is the body of the woman. The more so, when I am born of no womb, how can I find happiness there? Not only in this birth, but in my previous birth, too, I had no desire to be born of any womb. How can I desire now to enjoy the pleasure of urine and faeces in the face of the bliss of Self, that has got no other bliss equal to it? The high-souled persons that find pleasure in the Self never go after the sensual pleasures of the objects of enjoyments.

When I studied the *Veda* in detail, it struck me that the *Vedas* dealt with the *śāstra* of *karma-mārga* (the path of action); and it is all full of *hiṁsā* (injury to others). Then I took Bṛhaspati as my *guru* to show me the way to true wisdom; but soon I found that he, too, was attacked with the dreadful disease *avidyā* (ignorance) and plunged in the terrible ocean of world, full of *māyā*. So it became quite clear to my mind, how could he save me? If the physician be diseased himself, how can he effect cures to other diseases? When I am desirous of liberation, how can I get it from a *guru* who is himself deeply attached to the world; how can such a one treat my case to free me, from the disease of attachment to this world? It would be merely a farce.

I bowed down to the *guru* and now I am come to you to save me, frightened by this terrible serpent of *saṁsāra*. Day and night the *jīvas* travel in this awful wheel of *saṁsāra*, this constellation of Zodiac; they are moving like the Sun and never get any rest. O father! If we discuss about the truth of *ātman*, we will at once find that there is no trace of happiness in this *saṁsāra*. As the worms enjoy pleasures in the midst of faeces, so the ignorant persons find pleasures in this *saṁsāra*. Those who have studied the *Vedas* and other *śāstras,* and yet are attached to the world, are certainly deluded and blind like horses, pigs and dogs; no one is more stupid and ignorant than those persons. Getting this extremely rare human birth and studying the *Vedānta* and other *śāstras*, if they be attached to this world, then who are the men that will attain freedom? What more wonder can you find in this world than the fact that persons attached to wives, sons and houses are denominated as Paṇḍitas? That man who is not bound by this *saṁsāra*, composed of the three *guṇas* of Māyā, is actually Paṇḍita; that man is intelligent and he has understood the real import of the *śāstras*. What use can there be in studying the *śāstras*, that teach how to bind men more firmly in this *saṁsāra*, full of Māyā, in vain?

That *śāstra* ought to be studied, which tells how a man would be liberated. The house is called *gṛha* because it catches hold of a man firmly. So what happiness can you expect from the house which is like a prison? O father! I am therefore afraid. Those Paṇḍitas are certainly stupid and they are certainly deceived by the Creator, who having the birth even of men, become again imprisoned.'

Hearing these words of Śūka, Vyāsa spoke as follows: 'O Son! The house is never a prison, nor is it the cause of any bondage; the householder whose mind is unattached can get *mokṣa*, in spite of his being such. Truthful, holy, earning wealth by just means and performing the rites and ceremonies according to rules as stated in the Vedas, and doing *śrāddhas* duly, a householder can certainly get Mokṣa. See a man who is a Brahmachāri, who is an ascetic, who is a Vānaprasthī or follows any other method or vow, all have got to worship the householder after midday. The religious

householder, too; welcomes them all, with sweet words, and gives them food with great love and respect, and thus does them an amount of good. For this reason the householder's stage is the most excellent of all; and I have not seen or heard of any other *āśrama* superior to it. For this reason Vasiṣṭha and other *ācāryas* resorted to householder's life, in spite of their being endowed with great wisdom O highly fortunate one! If one performs duly the rites and ceremonies of the *Vedas*, there is nothing that is impracticable to him. Be it the birth in a good family, or the enjoyment of heavens say, or be it *mokṣa*, whatever one desires is fructified to success. Also there is no such rule that one will have to remain in one and in the same *āśrama* throughout his life. The Paṇḍitas who know *dharma* say that pupils can go from one *āsrama* to another, Therefore, O child! accept Agṇi (the householder's fire) and try your best to do unremittingly your duties. O Son! Enter into a householder's life and appease the Devas, Pitṛs and men; procreate sons and enjoy the pleasures of household life. When old age will come, quit the house and take up the Vānaprasthāshram (the third stage) and go to a forest and perform the excellent vows and then take up the *dharma* of the Sannyāsa (renunciation of everything).

O Fortunate one! He who does not take a wife is certainly maddened by these indomitable five organs of action, five organs of senses and mind. Therefore the makers of the *śāstras* say that to save one self from the pernicious influences of these vicious senses, one is to take wife during his youth and then be engaged in performing *tapasyā* during his old age. O fortunate one! In days of yore, the fiery Rājarsi Viśvāmitra practiced very severe *tapasyā* without any food for three thousand years, and thought he was very strong and shining like fire, yet he was fascinated by the charm of the celestial nymph Menakā. And an auspicious daughter was born from the womb of Menakā by Viśvāmitra. My father Parāśara, though a great ascetic, was struck with Cupid's arrows at the sight of the daughter of a fisherman, named Kāli and accepted her in the boat. What more than this, that Brahmā seeing his own daughter Sandhyā was struck by passion and ran after her, when Bhagavān Rudra Deva made him unconscious by his *humkār* sound and made Brahmā desist from the attempt.

So, O fortunate one! Take my word, pregnant of good issues, and marry a lady, born of a good family, and follow the path presented in the Vedas.'

Thus ends the fourteenth Chapter of the 1st Skandha, on the birth of Śūkadeva and the duties of householders in the Mahā Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—the dispassion of Śūka

1-67. Hearing these words of Vyāsadeva Śūkadeva said: 'O Father! I do not like at all to take to a householder's life; as I see clearly that it fastens men, as a cord fastens animals, and is a source of incessant pain. O Father! Where can you expect happiness from a householder who is always loaded with anxiety how and whence to get wealth? Those, who have greed for wealth oppress even their poor relatives, and extort money. Even one who is the lord of the three worlds, who is their Indra, he also is not so happy as a beggar that has no desires. See, then, who else can be happy in this world? Whenever an ascetic is seen to practice severe asceticism, Indra, the lord of the Devas becomes anxious and sorry, and raises various obstacles in his way. See also that Brahmā is not happy with his big *saṁsāra* (his creation which is his house). Bhagavān Viṣṇu, though He has got His beautiful Kamalā, the presiding Deity of all wealth and prosperity, is always suffering, since He is incessantly engaged in fighting with the Asuras; and though He is the husband of Lakṣmī and full of prosperity, every now and then, He practices terrible asceticism with great care and earnestness. So who else is there who is possessed of constant happiness? I know also Bhagavān Śaṅkara, too, suffers incessant troubles and has to fight against the Daityās. So, then, O Father: how can a poor householder be happy when the rich householder cannot sleep happily, with his constant care for wealth? O highly fortunate one! Knowing full well this truth of the world, why are you plunging me, your son, in this terrible *saṁsāra*, full of pains and agonies?

O Father! What shall I say to you about the miseries of the world! There is pain in birth, pain in old age, pain in death, and pain in the life in the womb full of urine and faeces; but the pain arising from desire and greed is more terrible than all the pains mentioned above; and then, the pains experienced while asking for them are greater than the pangs of death. Alas! There is no other way for the Brahmāṇas to earn their livelihood than to accept gifts from others. Therefore the Brahmāṇas have to suffer daily death-like pangs in having to wait in expectation from others; can there be anything more regrettable than this? The Brahmāṇas, studying all the *Vedas* and *dharma-śāstras* and acquiring wisdom, have got at last to go to the rich and praise them carefully in expectation of some money. O Father! if one does not become a householder, then what care is there to feed one's own belly? If there be contentment in the mind, any how the belly can be filled with leaves, roots and fruits; but if there be wife, sons and grandsons and many dependent relatives, then to feed them all, much trouble and anxiety are experienced.

So how can you expect, O Father! perfect happiness in the world? So teach me, O Father! the *śāstras* on *yoga* and eternal truth that will give perfect happiness; no advice in *karma-kāṇḍa* (the path of action) will bring me pleasure. Now advise me how the *karmas* can be exhausted; how the root of the three sorts of *karmas*—*saṅcita*, *prārabdha* and *vartamāna*—giving torments of birth, death etc., the Avidyā, the great ignorance, can be destroyed. The fools do not understand how the women suck the blood out of persons like leeches, for they get themselves deluded by their gestures and postures! The lady of the house, whom the people call *kāntā*, the beautiful one, steal away the virile semen, the strength and energy in the way of giving them happiness as sexual intercourse, and their minds and wealth and everything by their crooked love conversations; so see what greater thief can there be than a woman? In my opinion, those that are ignorant are certainly deluded by the Creator; they accept wife to destroy their own pleasure of happiness. They can never understand that the women can never be the source of pleasure; they are the source of all miseries.'

Hearing these words of Śūka, Vyāsa became merged in the deep sea of cares and anxieties, thinking what to do then. The incessant tears of pain flowed from his eyes; his whole body began to shiver and his mind became too much worried.

Seeing this distressed and sorrowful state of his father, Śūkdeva, with eyes full of wonder, said: 'Oh! What a power has Māyā got? Oh! He, whose words are accepted by all, with great love and care as equivalent to the *Vedas*, who is the author of the *Vedānta-darśana*, and before whom nothing is veiled in ignorance, Oh! that greatest Paṇḍita, the knower of all the *tattvas*, is now deluded by Māyā? Oh! what is that Māyā who has been able to delude Vyāsadeva, the son of Satyavatī, so skilled in the knowledge of *brahmā-vidyā;* I also do not know how, with what great care, one is to practice *sādhanā* towards Her.

Alas! He who has composed eighteen *MahāPurāṇas* and the great *Mahābhārata*, who has divided the *Vedas* in four parts, the same Vedavyāsa has today been deluded by the power of Māyā! What to speak of other persons! Oh! Māyā has deluded Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and others and the whole universe; then who is there in the three worlds that is not fascinated by Her influence! I therefore, take refuge unto the Internal Governess, the Devī Mahā-Māyā. Oh! what wonderful power She wields! By her own *māyik* power, She has kept God even under Her control, who is omniscient and the Controller of all. The Paṇḍitas who know the *Purāṇas* say that Vyāsadeva is born of the part of Viṣṇu; but, see the wonder, that he is today plunged in the sea of delusion like a merchant whose ship has been wrecked. Alas! How great is the wonderful power of Māyā! The all-knowing Vyāsa is today under the control of Māyā and is weeping like an ordinary man! So I have come to the firm conclusion that the wise Paṇḍitas are incapable to surpass the strength of Māyā. What a great error arises through the power of Māyā! See, indeed!! who is he and who am I? What for we have come here? There is no certainty, nothing whatsoever, about that. And, see, also, how he has got the nice idea of 'father' on his body and the idea of 'my son' in my body, that are composed of five elements.

This is now quite evident to me that, when the Brahmāṇa Maharṣi Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana is weeping under the influence of Māyā, She is the strongest of all; even those who are skilled in the great Māyā fall under Her prey.'

Then Śūkadeva bowed down mentally to the Devī, Mahā-Māyā, who is the Creatrix of Brahmā and the other Devas and who is the Controller of them all; and then began to speak the following auspicious words pregnant with reason, to his father Vyāsadeva, greatly distressed and plunged in the sea of sorrows: 'O Father! you are exceedingly fortunate, for you are the son of the high-souled Parāśara and you yourself are the instructor of real truth, the *tattva-jñāṇa*, to all persons; so, O Lord! why are you giving vent to sorrows, like an ordinary bewildered man? O Mahābhāga! why are you plunging yourself in this great error, though you are a high-souled personage! See, it is quite true that now I am born as your son; but this I don't know: what relation existed between you and me in my previous birth? So, O highly intelligent one! Open your eyes of wisdom, and be patient; do not throw yourself, in vain, in the sea of sorrows. All this universe is like a net of delusion; knowing this, abandon all your grief; why are you feeling yourself so much weak and distressed, for your attachment towards your son? Hunger is satisfied by eating something, and thirst is satisfied by the drinking of water; hunger is not satisfied by seeing the son. So the organ of scent is satisfied by smelling sweet scents; and the organ of hearing is satisfied by hearing sweet music; and when thirst arises to enjoy women, that is satisfied only by sexual intercourse; but what satisfaction can a son give? So what shall I do to you by remaining as your son? The son, in fact, is not the cause of any satisfaction to one's self. For this reason, in ancient days, the poor Brahmin Ajigarta gave his son to the king Harischandra, for necessary equivalent price in money, who wanted a man for his sacrifice where human beings are to be sacrificed as victims. In fact, those things that are urgently required as necessities give happiness; and all these articles can be obtained by wealth; so if you want to enjoy happiness, then earn money; of what use shall I be to you as your son? O Muni! you can see subtle things and you are greatly intelligent; so I pray to you, to look upon me as your son and open my eyes of wisdom, that I can

be free forever from this womb of birth. O Sinless one! To get a human birth in this land of *karma* (in India) is very difficult; again to get a Brahmāṇa birth is extremely rare; so when I have got this so very rare birth, why shall I spend my time in vain? O Father! Though I have served many spiritual teachers, fraught with wisdom, for many years, yet the firm idea "I am, as it were, bound up in this net of *saṁsāra,*" the notion covered with the darkness of ignorance, caused by desires, this net of *saṁsāra* does not leave me.'

When the son Śūkadeva of extraordinary power and intelligence spoke thus, Vyāsa saw that his son was strongly inclined to take to the fourth *āśram* of *sannyāsa* and spoke thus: 'O Son! If your mind has become so, then read *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, composed by me, highly auspicious, voluminous, and the second *Vedas*.

In this you have the chapters on Creation (*sarga*) and secondary creation (*upasarga*), etc., the five characteristics as in other *Purāṇas* and it is subdivided into twelve Skandhas. Hearing of this *Bhāgavata* brings up to the mind that Brahmā alone is real and all the universe is unreal, and knowledge both intuitive and indirect springs up. For this very reason, the *Bhāgavata* treatise is considered as the ornament of the *Purāṇas*. Therefore, O highly intelligent one! you better study the *Purāṇa*. O Child! In days of yore, at the end of a *kalpa*, Bhagavān Hari was lying as a small child on a floating leaf of a banyan tree, and was thinking thus: "Who is the Intelligent One that has created me a small child? What is His object? Of what stuff am I made of? and how am I created? whence can I know all this?" At this moment the Devī Bhagavatī Who is all *caitanya*, seeing the high-souled Bhagavān Hari musing thus, spoke out in the form of a celestial voice in the following half-stanza: **"All this that is seen is I Myself; nothing other than that which is eternal is actually existent."**

Compare *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.33:

"It is I who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, and after annihilation what remains will also be I."

Bhagavān Viṣṇu, then, began to think deeply the above celestial voice: "Who has uttered this word, pregnant of truth, to me? How shall I come to know the speaker, whether that is female, male or a hermaphrodite?" Pondering over this for a long time, when he could not come to a definite conclusion, he began to repeat (make *japam*) frequently that word of Bhagavatī with a whole heart. When Hari, lying on a banyan tree leaf, became very anxious to know what the above words implied, then the all-auspicious Devī Bhagavatī with a beautiful face, calm and quiet appearance, appeared before Bhagavān Viṣṇu, of unrivalled splendor, in the form of Mahā-Lakṣmī, who is all of *sattva-guṇa*, surrounded by Her *vibhūtis*, Her Manifestations of attendents, Her smiling companions of the same age, decked with ornaments, and wearing divine clothing, and holding each in their four divine hands, conch shell, disc, club, and lotus.

The lotus-eyed Viṣṇu was very much surprised to see that beautiful Devī, standing without anything to rest on that water; He saw that on four sides of the Devī, were staying Rati, Bhūti, Buddhi, Mati, Kīrti, Smṛti, Dhṛti, Śraddhā, Medhā, Svadhā, Svāhā, Kshudhā, Nidrā, Dayā, Gati, Tusti, Pusti, Kṣamā, Lajjā, Jṛmbhā, Tandrā and other personified forces, each possessing a clear distinct form, and endowed with a clear distinct feeling. In the hands of them all were divine weapons; on their necks, necklaces and garlands of Mandāra flowers; and all the limbs of their bodies were decorated with divine ornaments. Seeing in that one mass of ocean the Devī Lakṣmī and Her *śaktis*, Bhagavān Janārdan, the soul of all, became greatly astonished and thought within Himself thus: 'What is this? Is this Māyā that I am witnessing? Whence have appeared these women? and

whence have I come here, lying on this banyan leaf? How has the banyan tree come to existence in this one mass of ocean? And who is it that has placed me here in the form of a child? Is this my Mother? Or is this some Māyā that can create impossible things? Why has She made Herself Manifest before me now? Or is there some hidden motive that She has appeared thus? What ought I to do now? Or shall I go to some other place? or shall I continue remaining here in this form of the child, silent and with vigilance?'

Thus ends the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Skandha on the dispassion of śūka and the instructions of Bhagavatī to Hari in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—Śūka desires to see Janaka

Vyāsa spoke: "Then the Devī Mahā-Lakṣmī, seeing the Deva Janārdana lying on a banyan leaf and surprised, spoke to him, smiling: 'O Viṣṇu! Why are you becoming so much astonished? Before this, since time immemorial (without any beginning) there had been many dissolutions (*pralayas*); and many *sṛṣṭis* (creations); and at the beginning of every creation You came first into existence and every time I was united with You; but now You have forgotten Me under the spell of that Mahā-śakti.

That Highest Mahā-śakti is transcendental to all the *guṇas;* but you and I are with *guṇas*. Know me as the *śakti* of all of *sattva-guṇa* who is widely known as Mahā-Lakṣmī. After this the Prajāpati Brahmā, full of *rajo-guṇa*, the creator of all the *lokas*, will come into existence from your navel lotus and will create the three worlds. Then he will perform severe *tapasyā* and acquire the excellent power to create, and will create the three worlds by his *rajo-guṇa*. That highly intelligent Prajāpati will create first, the five *mahā-bhūtas* (great elements) all endowed with *guṇas,* and then create mind with sensory organs and the presiding deities of the senses, and thus with all the ingredients fit for creation, will create all the worlds. Therefore He is

denominated by all as the Creator of Brahmāṇḍa. O highly fortunate one! You will be the Preserver of this Universe.

When the Prajāpati Brahmā will be angry at the beginning of the creation on his four mind-born sons, Rudra Deva will appear then from the center of Brahmā's eyebrows. On being born this Rudra Deva will practice very severe *tapasyā* and will get the Samhāra-śakti, who is all of *tamo-guṇa,* and at the end of the *kalpa* will destroy all this universe of five elements. O highly intelligent one! So I have come to you for this work of creation, etc. So take me to you as your Vaisnavī-śakti full of *sattva-guṇa*. O Madhusūdana! I will take refuge at your breast and will remain always with you.'

Hearing all this, Bhagavān Viṣṇu spoke: 'O beautiful Devī! The half-stanza was ere long heard by me, in clear words; by whom was that spoken? Kindly speak to me on this great auspicious secret first. For a great doubt has come and possessed my mind. What more shall I say than this that as a poor man always thinks of wealth, so I am thinking of that again and again.'

Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the Devī Mahā Lakṣmī smilingly said, with great affection: 'O Strong and Energetic one! I am now speaking in detail on this; listen. O Four-armed one! It is because I have come to You with form and endowed with *guṇas* that you have come to know me; but you have not known that *ādya-śakti*, the Prime Force transcending all the *guṇas*, though She is the substratum of all the *guṇas*. O highly fortunate one! That Devī Bhāgavatī, transcendantal to all the *guṇas*, uttered that all-auspicious, highly sanctifying semi-stanza, the essence of all the *Vedas*. O destroyer of the enemies! I think that there is the highest grace of that Highest Śakti on You, that She spoke the greatest secret to You for Your benefit. O one performing good vows! know those words uttered by Mahāvidyā as the essence of all the *śāstra*. So firmly retain them within Your heart; never forget them. There is no other thing save that, worth being known in

earnest. Because You are most beloved by the Devī! that She has spoken this to You.'

Hearing the words of the Devī Mahā-Lakṣmī, the four-armed Bhagavān took that semi-stanza as a *mantra* to be repeated in right earnest within his mind and cherished that forever within his heart. After some time, Brahmā born of the lotus of the navel of Viṣṇu, became afraid of the two Daityās Madhu and Kaitabha, took refuge of Bhagavān Viṣṇu; Viṣṇu killed the two demons and began to do distinctly the *japam* of the semi-stanza.

Brahmā, born of the lotus, then asked Viṣṇu with a gladdened heart: 'O Lord of the Devas! what *japam* are You doing? Lotus-eyed! Is there any other one more powerful than You? O Lord of the Universe! whom do You think of, and thus feel yourself so happy?'

Hearing Brahmā, Bhagavān Hari said: 'O highly fortunate one! Think out yourself once of the Primordial Force, the auspicious Bhāgavatī *ādya-śakti* who is reigning everywhere as the cause and effect, and you will be able to understand everything. My presiding Deity is that immeasurable eternal Mahā-śakti Brahmamyī; on whose *śakti*, as a receptacle with form on this ocean rests the whole Universe; I am thinking of That, by which is created time and again this entire Universe, moving and non-moving. When the Devī Bhāgavatī, the giver of boons, becomes graciously pleased, the human beings become freed of this bondage of *saṁsāra;* and again that highest Eternal Wisdom, the cause of *mukti*, becomes the source of bondage to this world, of those who are deluded by Her.

She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of this universe. O Brahmā! You, I and all other things of the entire Universe are born of the *cit-śakti* (the power of consciousness) of Her and Her alone; there is no manner of doubt in this. The semi-stanza by which She has sown within me the seed of Bhāgavata will get expanded by the beginning of the Dvāpara Yuga.'

Vedavyāsa continued: 'While Bhagavān Brahmā was resting on the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu, he got the seed of the *Bhāgavata*. Then he gave it to his own

son Nārada, the best of the Munis. Nārada gave it to me, and I have expanded that into twelve Skandhas. Therefore, O Mahābhāga! You now study this *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, equal to the *Vedas* and endowed with five characteristics. In this the wonderful glorious deeds and life of the Devī Bhāgavatī, the hidden meanings of the *Vedas* and the wisdom, the Truth are all described; hence this is the best of all the *Purāṇas* and sanctifying like the *dharma-śāstra*. It is the substratum of *brahma-vidyā;* therefore if men study this, they will easily cross this sea of world; and those that are stupid and deluded get pleasure in hearing the death of Vṛtrāsura and many other narrations that are interspersed in this book. Therefore, O Mahābhāga! hear this sanctifying *Bhāgavata Purāṇam* and retain it firmly within your heart. O best of persons! You are the foremost of those that are intelligent; so you are worthy to read this *Purāṇa*. Eighteen thousand *ślokas* are in that *Purāṇa* and you better get them by heart; for if anybody reads or bears this *Purāṇa*, fit to be praised in every way, all-auspicious, capable to increase posterity by the addition of sons and grandsons, giving long life, happiness and peace, he sees the Sun of Wisdom, resting in his breast and dispelling all darkness of ignorance.'

Sūta continued: "Thus speaking to his son Śūkadeva, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, my *guru*, taught us the *Purāṇa* and thought it was voluminous. I got the whole of it by heart. Śūka studied the *Purāṇa* and stayed in Vyāsa's *āśrama*. But he was naturally dispassionate like Sanat Kumāra, etc., the mind-born sons of Brahmā; therefore he could not get peace in studying the contents of the *Purāṇa* which deal with *karma-kānda* (actions) fit for the householders. He remained in a solitary place, his heart being troubled very much. He appeared as if his heart was void. He did not mind much for his food and he did not fast also.

Once Vyāsadeva seeing his son Śūkdeva so thoughtful, said: 'O Son! What do you think constantly? And why are you troubling yourself so much? Like an impoverished man entangled in debt, you are always disturbed by your thoughts. O child! When I your father is living, for what do you care? Leave aside your inmost sorrows and be happy. Cast off all other thoughts,

think of the wisdom contained in the *śāstras*, and try your best to acquire *vijñāṇa*, the essence of wisdom. O Suvrata! If you do not get peace by my words then go, at my word to Mithilā, the city of the King Janaka. O Mahābhāga! That king Janaka, who is liberated while living, whose soul is religious and who is the ocean of truth, will cut asunder the net of your delusion. O Son! Go to the king, question him on *varnāśram-dharma* (*dharma* relating to caste and stages of life) and remove your doubts. That royal sage Janaka, the greatest *yogī*, the knower of Brahman and liberated while living, is of pure soul, truth-speaking, of a calm and quiet heart and always fond of *yoga*.'

Hearing these words of Vyāsadeva, the highly-spirited Śūkadeva of unrivalled energy replied: 'O virtuous one! Your word can never turn out false; but when I hear that the king Janaka is gladly governing his kingdom, still he is liberated while living, and disembodied while he has body—this your word appears to me quite contradictory like light and darkness at one and the same place and time, and seems that these two epithets simply indicate vanity and nothing else. O Father! This is my greatest doubt: how can the royal sage Janaka govern his kingdom, being disembodied. It appears that your word about Janaka is quite false as the son of a barren woman.

O Father! I have now got a desire to see the disembodied king Janaka; for my mind is plunged in great doubt: how can he remain in *saṁsāra* unattached like a lotus leaf in water? O Greatest Orator! is the liberation of Janaka according to Buddhistic doctrines or like the opinions of the materialistic Cārvākas? O highly-intelligent one! How can the royal sage Janaka, in spite of his being a householder, quit the usage of his senses? I cannot comprehend this. How can the things enjoyed by him appear to him as if unenjoyed, and how can his doings be his non-doings? How can the ideas of mother, wife, son, sister, prostitutes and various persons having different relations, arising within him vanish again altogether? And if that be not the case, how can his Jivanmuktahood be possible? If his taste be

present of pungent, sour, astringent, bitter, and sweet things, then it is clear that he is enjoying all the most excellent things,

O Father! This is my greatest wonder and doubt, that if he has got the sense of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, how can he be a Jivanmukta? That king is thoroughly expert in reigning his kingdom; how then the ideas of enemy, friend, taste and distaste, remaining absent in him, can he govern his state? How can he see with the same eyes a thief and an ascetic? And if he makes any distinction, how then is his liberation effected? I have never seen such a man that is liberated while living and at the same time an expert king in governing his subjects. For these reasons, great doubt has arisen in me. I cannot understand how the king Janaka can be liberated while he is remaining in his house. Whatever it be, I desire now greatly to see him after his Jivanmuktahood; so I desire to go to Mithilā to solve my doubts.'

Thus ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the first Skandha on śūka's desiring to go to Mithilā to see Janaka, in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter XVII—Śūka's self-control

Sūta said: "Thus speaking to his father about his intention to go to Mithilā, the high-souled Śūkadeva fell prostrate at his feet and with folded palms said: 'O highly fortunate one! Your word must be obeyed by me; now I desire to see, as you say, the kingdom of Janaka; kindly give me permission. O father! Again the doubt is coming within me how the king Janaka is governing his kingdom without sentencing anybody? And if there be no punishment within his kingdom, no one will remain in the path of virtue. It is for the sake of preserving religion that Manu and the other sages have always prescribed for punishment; how, then, religion can be preserved without inflicting punishment. O Mahābhāga! What you have spoken to me appears to me oxymoronic like the sentence "My mother is barren." So, O destroyer of foes! Permit me and I will start for Mithilā.'

Seeing the greatly wise son Śūka, void of any desires, earnestly anxious to go to Mithilā, Vedavyāsa gave him a cordial embrace and said: "O highly intelligent son Śūka! Peace be on you! Have a long life. O child! Speak truly before me and go. O son! Say that after going to Mithilā you will come back again to this *āśrama;* never that you will go anywhere else. O son! Seeing the lotus face of yours, I am passing my days happily; if I do not see you, I will suffer extreme pain. What more than this, that you are my life and soul? I am saying, therefore, after seeing Janaka and clearing your doubts come here again and remain at peace, and study on the *Vedas*.'

Vyāsa having spoken thus, Śūka bowed down and circumambulated his most worshipable father, and went out; he began to walk very fast like an arrow, leaving the bow, and when it has left the bow. On his journey he saw various countries, various classes of persons, earning money, various gardens and forests, various trees; in some places he saw fields with green grains and grains standing on them; at others he saw ascetics practising asceticism, and initiated *yājniks* performing *yajñas* or sacrifices; in some places he saw *yogīs* practising *yoga*, the high-souled *vānaprasthīs* in the third stage of life, residing in the forest, and at others he saw devotees of Śiva, Śakti, Gaṇeśa, Sūryā, Viṣṇu and many others.

Thus he went on in his journey, in great wonder, towards his destination. In his passage he crossed Meru in two years and the Mount Himālayas in one year, and then reached the city of Mithilā. Going there he found the place full of wealth, corn, grains, etc., and all prosperities and the people were all very happy and they observed the rule of conduct as in the *śāstras*. When he was about to enter into the city, the guard in front of the gate stopped him, asking 'Who are you? Sir. What for are you come here?' When the guard asked him thus, he replied nothing, went away to a distance and with great wonder could not help laughing in his mind and remained motionless like a statue. At this the guard said: 'O Brahmāṇa! Why have you remained silent? Kindly say what for you have come here? I know this well, that nobody goes anywhere without having something to do. The king has forbidden strangers whose parentage and character are unknown.

Therefore O Brahmāṇa! Everyone has to take the king's permission before he goes into the city. It seems that you are a very energetic Brahmāṇa and that you know the *Vedas;* so O giver of honor! speak out to me your object-in-view and go into the city as you like.'

Hearing these words of the guard, Śūkadeva began to say: 'I have come to see the city of Videha Janaka; but now I see that persons like me find great difficulty to enter here; so O Gatekeeper! I have got the answer from you. I was a great fool that I was so much deluded that to see the king I crossed many countries and over topped the two mountains and have come here. O Mahābhāga! What blame can I put on others? It is my father that has deluded me; or my *karma* done in my previous birth is now making me wander about. Alas! In this world greed for money is the sole cause to make a man knock about; but I have not got that even; my erroneous idea has brought me so far. I now realize that a man, having no desires, gets constant happiness if he be not plunged in the net of delusion; else he cannot have any such. O Mahābhāga! Though I have no desire of anything, yet I am plunged in the sea of *moha*. Alas! Where is Meru? and where is Mithilā? A great distance intervenes. I have walked so great a distance on foot; alas! this is this the result of my so long a journey! Therefore I am thoroughly convinced that the Creator has deceived me. One must have to suffer for his *prārabdha-karma*, be it auspicious or inauspicious. One must make one's effort, being always under the control of this Law of *karma*. Though there be no apparent desire or cause, yet this *prārabdha-karma* always puts a man into different actions. This place is not a *tīrtha* (holy place) nor there are the *Vedas* personified here, that I have taken so much pains and trouble to come here—only there is one thing here and that is the king Janaka; but there is no chance to see him even; for I have not been able to enter even within his kingdom.'

Thus saying, Śūka remained silent and began to stay as one who has taken the vow to remain silent. The guard then took him to be a very wise Brahmāṇa and spoke in sweet words: 'O Brahmāṇa! Go to the place, as you like, where you have got your work. O Brahmāṇa! I stopped you; so please

excuse me for any offence incurred by me. Free persons like you have mercy alone as their greatest strength.'

Hearing this Śūkadeva said: 'What is your fault? you are dependent on another; the servant ought to obey the words of his master and serve him by all means; and there is no fault of the king, too, in your not allowing me to enter; for the wise persons ought to ascertain by all means, whether newcomers are enemies or thieves. Hence when I am quite a stranger suddenly come to this place, the fault is wholly mine. Every person knows that it is lowering oneself to go to another's house.

The guard then said: 'O great Brahmāṇa! what is happiness? and what is pain? what ought to be done by your well-wisher? who is your enemy? and who is your benefactor? Now advise me on all these points.'

Hearing this Śūkadeva said: 'Everywhere men are divided, as far as their internal natures are concerned, into two classes; they are called attached or unattached. And the minds of these two classes are again of two kinds. The attached man is stupid and cunning; and the unattached is subdivided into three classes: knowing, unknowing and middling. The cunning man is divided again into two classes: Whether his cunningness is according to the dictates of *śāstras,* or arising from his intellect. Again intellect is sub-divided into two, whether it is *yukta* (one-pointed) or *ayukta* (diverted).'

The guard spoke: 'O Learned one! I cannot understand what you say; so explain to me what they mean.'

Śūkadeva said: 'Those who are attached to this world are said to be attached persons. These attached persons feel frequently various pleasures and pains. When they get wives, sons, wealth, honor, rise, etc., they get pleasures; and if the do not get any of these they feel at every moment intense pain. Now the attached person seeks to take such means as will secure them the pleasures of this world; so whoever acts against those means are denominated as breakers of their happiness, and so they are enemies; and whoever aids in their acquiring pleasures are denominated as

their friends. Of these the attached but at the same time cunning man does not get confounded and bewildered by them; whereas stupid attached man gets always bewildered everywhere.

The man that is dispassionate and engaged in determining the Self dwells in a solitary place, meditates on the Self, finds pleasure in studying the *Vedānta-śāstras,* and feels pain in all the topics on worldly affairs. The wise man that wants his real welfare and is averse to the worldly enjoyments finds that he has many enemies; lust, anger, palaces, etc. Contentment is his only friend in the three *lokas* and no one is his real Self.'

Hearing these words of Śūkadeva, the watchman considered Śūkadeva a very wise man and soon led him to a very beautiful compartment. Śūkadeva then began to see that the town was full of three sorts of men: good, middling, and bad; and the shops were filled with various articles of merchandise. The many things were being incessantly purchased and sold there. Within that town, filled with many men, money and all sorts wealth and prosperities, almost everywhere were seen instances of attachment, hatred, lust, anger, greed, vanity and delusion; at some parts there were seen persons quarrelling with each other.

Seeing thus the three sorts of persons, the highly energetic Śūka, blazing like a second Sun, went to the royal palace when the gateman stopped him. He stood there like a log of wood and began to meditate on *mokṣa* (liberation). He began to think the light and darkness as same; the greatly ascetic Śūka became merged in *dhyāna* (meditation) and remained motionless at one place.

In an instant, a royal minister came out, and saluting him with folded hands, took him to a second compartment. Here the minister showed him beautiful divine gardens adorned nicely with rows of divine trees bearing fruits, gave him a good reception and took him to a very beautiful palace. The minister next ordered the public women in royal service, expert in music and playing with instruments, and skilled in *Kāma-śāstra* (the science of amorous dealings) to attend on Śūkadeva and went out of the palace.

Śūka, the son of Vyāsa, remained there. Those prostitutes then prepared various dishes, suited to the time and place, and sought the satisfaction of Śūka and then worshipped him duly with greatest devotion. Those ladies, then, residing within the four walls became enamored to see the beauty of Śūkadeva, and showed him the gardens that existed in the inner compound. Śūka was young and beautiful; over this he was extremely lovely, of nice limbs; his speech was soft and gentle; so he looked like a second Cupid (the god of love); all the ladies, struck with Cupid's arrows, lost their con lifesciousness. Then recovering, they considered Śūkadeva to be the great controller of passions, and began to serve him with great care. The pure-minded śūka, born of Arani, looked on them like his mothers. Śūka, finding pleasure in the Self and a controller of anger was not pleased or displeased with anything; so though be saw that the ladies were disturbed with amorous feelings, he remained quite undisturbed, calm and quiet.

The ladies then prepared a very nice bed whereon Śūkadeva would sleep; it was spread over with nice clean bed sheet; many nice pillows were placed. He then,washed his feet and with vigilance, put on his finger the ring prepared of Kuśa grass, and completing his evening *sandhyā*, became merged in *dhyāna*. Meditating on the Supreme Brahman for three hours (one *prahāra*), he slept for 6 hours and getting up, again became merged in *brahma-dhyāna* for the last three hours of the night. Then at the *brahma-muhūrta* (one hour preceding the sunrise) he took his bath and completing his morning duties, became immersed in *samādhi* (inner enlightenment) and sat at ease."

Thus ends the 17th chapter of the 1st Skandha on Śūka's displaying his self-control amidst the women of the palace of Mithilā in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam.

Chapter XVIII—Janaka's instructions to Śūkadeva

1-22. Sūta said: "Maharṣis! When the king Janaka heard of the arrival of Śūkadeva, the son of his *guru*, he took his priest before him and attended by his ministers, came before him in pure spirit. Then he duly worshipped Śūka, offering him *pādya, arghya* and an excellent seat, and a cow yielding milk, and then enquired about his welfare. Śūkadeva accepted duly all the things offered by the king, informed him of his well-being, and asked the king in return of his welfare and took his seat at ease on the *āsana*.

The king Janaka asked the son of Vyāsa, full of peace: 'O Mahābhāga Muni Sattama! You are devoid of any attachment and you have no desires. May I enquire why such a person as your honored self has come to me?'

Śūkadeva said: 'O great king! my father told me thus: O child; take a wife; for the householder's life is the best of all the *āśramas*. But I thought that will be the source of my bondage to this world, and therefore did not obey his word, though he was my highest *guru*.

He then again said to me: "If one takes a household life, it does not at once follow that he will be held in bondage." Yet I did not agree to that. Then the Muni, thinking me still to be in some doubt, spoke this word of advice to me: "O Son! Do not be sorry; go to Mithilā and have your doubts solved. There my disciple king Janaka is governing his kingdom without any source of danger. He is Jivanamukta (liberated while living) and is free from the ideas of body, etc., so everybody knows. When that royal sage Janaka, though governing his kingdom, is not seen tied up by Māyā, then O Son! why are you afraid of this *saṁsāra*, when you are living this forest life. Therefore, O Mahābhāga! Trust me and marry; and in case you doubt very much, then go and see the king Janaka; ask him and remove your doubts. He will certainly solve your doubts. But, O Son! After hearing him, come again quickly to me."

O king! When my father spoke thus, by his permission I have come now to your capital. O king! I don't want anything, save *mokṣa* (liberation);

therefore O Sinless one! Kindly advise what am I to do, so that I attain *mokṣa*. O Lord of kings! Practising asceticism, going to the holy places of pilgrimage, holding *vratas* (vows), performing sacrifices, studying the *Vedas*, or earning wisdom, whatever is the cause of *mokṣa*, kindly say that.'

Hearing this, Janaka said: 'O son of my Guru! I am telling what ought to be done by the Brahmāṇas following the path of *mokṣa;* listen. After having the holy thread, a Brahmāṇa should live in the house of his *guru* to study the *Vedas*, the *Vedānta* and pay the *dakṣinā* (fee) to the *guru* according to the rules; he will then return home, marry and enter into the householder's life; he should lead a life of contentment, be free from desires, sinless and truthful, earn his livelihood with a pure heart and according to the sanction of justice and conscience. He is to perform the Agṇihotra and other sacrifices; and after getting sons and grandsons, he is to leave his wife under the care of his son and then to take the life of a *vānaprastha* (3rd stage of life). That Brahmāṇa, the knower of *dharma*, must practice *tapasyā* and become master of his six passions (enemies); and when he gets disgusted with the world and the *vairāgyam* (dispassion) will arise within him, he would enter into the fourth *āśrama*. For, the man is first to enter into the householder's life and when he will be quite dispassionate towards the world, he will then have a right to take the *āśrama* of *sannyāsa* (Renunciation). A course contrary to this can never entitle one to the *sanyāsa-āśrama*.

This is the beneficial word of the *Vedas* and it must hold true; it cannot be false; this is my firm belief. O Śūka! In the *Vedas* are mentioned forty-eight *saṁskāras* (consecrations; purificatory rites); out of which the learned Mahātmas have reserved forty *saṁskāras* for the householders and the last eight *saṁskāras* (*śama, dama*, etc.) for the *sannyāsins*. And this good usage is heard to come down from very ancient times. A Brahmāṇa ought to complete his previous *āśramas* successively and then enter into the succeeding *āśrama*.'

23-30. Śūka said: 'If the pure *vairāgyam* (dispassion) arising out of knowledge and wisdom (*jñāṇa* and *vijñāṇa*) already arises (before taking to the *gṛhastha-āśram*), is it still necessary to pass through householder's life, *vānaprastha* life, etc., or is one entitled then to take up at once the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, quit everything and reside in the forest?'

Janaka said: 'O! One giving honor to the *śāstras* and *gurus!* Though the powerful passions seem to be under control in the period of unripened *yoga*, yet one ought not to trust them; for, it is generally seen, many imperfect *yogīns* find themselves disturbed by one or other of the senses. If the mind of one who has already entered into the *sannyāsa-āśram* gets perturbed in his course, then,you can see this for yourself, how can he satisfy desires of eating good things, sleeping nicely, seeing his son, or wishing any other desires, knowing them to lead to his degradation? He is then in a very serious state.

The net of desires is very difficult to be conquered by men; that can never die out. Therefore to put an end to them, the advise is to cut them slowly and slowly. He who sleeps on an elevated place has the danger of tumbling down; but one who sleeps in a low place has no such danger. So any man who has once taken the highest *dharma sannyāsa*, and if he be fallen, then he never gets hold of the real track. As an ant begins to get from the root of tree, and by and by gets to the topmost part of the branches, so human beings go by degrees from one *āśrama* to another till they go to the highest; then and then only they are able to get easily their desired truth. The birds without anticipating any danger, get up to the skies very quickly and soon they get tired and cannot go to their desired place; but the ant goes with rest to its desired place. This mind is very difficult to be controlled; for this reason men of unripened minds cannot conquer it all at once; and are advised to conquer it by and by, observing the laws of one *āśrama* after another.

31-37. See also if anybody, remaining in his household life be of a quiet temper and of good intellect, and if he takes success and failure in the same

light, and be not elated in times of pleasure and not depressed in times of pains, and does his duty for duty's sake without troubling his mind with cares and anxieties, then that householder acquires pure happiness by the realization of his Self and acquires *mokṣa*. There is no manner of doubt in this. O Sinless One! See, I am liberated while living, though I am engaged in preserving kingdom; if any source of pain or pleasure arises, I am not in any way affected by them. As I will attain in the end *videha-mukti* (liberation from bodies) though I am always wandering at my free will, enjoying various things as I like and do various things as it pleases me, so you can do your duties and then be liberated in the end.

O Son of my Guru! When this material world, the cause of all error according to the *vedānta-śāstra*, is simply an object of sight; then how can this material substance, an object of sight, be the source of bondage to the *ātman*, the Self? O Brahmāṇa! Though the five material elements can be seen, their qualities or *guṇas* can be known only by inference; so the Self is to be inferred; it can never be an object of sight; and also this Self, known by inference, changeless and without any impurity or stain, can never be bound by the visible changeful material thing. O Brahmāṇa! This impure heart is the source of all pleasure and pains; so when the heart becomes pure and quiet, all the things then become fully pure, O Brahmāṇa!

38-41. If going often and often to all *tīrthas* and bathing there does not make one's heart pure and holy, then all one's troubles are taken in vain. O Destroyer of enemies! It is the mind that is the cause of bondage or freedom; and not the body, nor the *jivātmā* (the embodied soul), nor the senses. The Self or *ātman* is always pure consciousness and is ever free; so, truly speaking, it can never be bound. Bondage and freedom reside in the mind; so when the Mind gets peace, the bondage of *saṁsāra* is also at an end. He is an enemy, he is a friend, he is neither an enemy nor friend, all these different thoughts reside in the mind and arise out of duality; how can the ideas of differences exist, when everything has become all one pervading self?

42-47. *Jīva* is Brahman; I am that Brahman and nothing else; there is nothing to be discussed here. It is owing to the dualities that monism appears unclear and differences between *jīva* and Brahman arise. O Mahābhāga! This difference is due to *avidyā* and by which this difference vanishes, that is termed *vidyā*. This difference between *vidyā* and *avidyā* ought to be always kept in view by those that are clever.

How can the pleasure from the cooling effect of the shadow be felt, if the heating effect of the rays of the Sun be not previously experienced? So how *vidyā* is to be experienced if *avidyā* be not felt before? *Sattva, rājas* and *tamo-guṇas* reside naturally in things made of *guṇas;* and the five principal elements reside naturally in substances made up of elements; so the senses reside naturally in their own forms, etc.; so how can there be any stain to the *ātman* which is always unattached? Yet to teach huMaṇity, the high-souled persons preserve the respect of the *Vedas* always with greatest care. If they do not do this, then O Sinless One! the ignorant persons would act lawlessly according to their wishes, like the Cārvākas; and *dharma* will become extinct. When *dharma* will become extinct, the *varnāśrama* will gradually die out; so the well-wishers should always follow the path of the *Vedas*.'

48-56. Śūka said: 'O King! I have now heard all that you have said; still my doubt remains; it is not solved. O King! In the *dharma* of the *Vedas*, there is *hiṁsā* (act of killing or injuring); and we hear that there is much of *adharma* (sin) in the above *hiṁsā*. So how can the *dharma* of the *Vedas* give *mokṣa?* O King! One can see before one's eyes that the drinking of Soma-rasa, the killing of animals, the eating of fish and flesh and so on are advised in the *Vedas;* so much so that in the sacrificial ceremony named *Sautrāmana* the rule of drinking wine and many other *vratas* are clearly mentioned; even gambling is advised in the *Vedas*. So how can *mukti* be obtained by following the *Veda-dharma?*

It is heard that in ancient times, there was a great king, named Śaśavindu—very religious, truthful, and performing sacrifices, very liberal; he protected

the virtuous, and chastised those that were wicked and going astray. He performed many *yajñas*, where many cows and sheep were sacrificed according to the rules of the *Vedas* and abundant *dakṣiṇa* (sacrificial fees) were presented to everyone that performed their parts in the sacrifices. In these sacrifices, the hides of the cows that were sacrificed as victims, were heaped to such an enormous extent that they looked liked a second Bindhyāchal mountain. Then the rains fell and the dirty water coming out of that enormous heap of skins flowed down and gave rise to a river which was thence called the Charmanvatī river. And what a wonder? That cruel king left behind him an ineffaceable fame and went to Heavens. Whatever it may be, it can never come to my head that I should perform the *Veda-dharma*, filled with so many acts of killing and cruelties. Again, when the men find pleasure in sexual intercourses and when they do not have that intercourse, they experience pain. How can you expect such persons to attain liberation?'

57-61. Janaka said: 'The killing of animals in a sacrificial ceremony is not killing; it is known as *ahiṁsā*, for that *hiṁsā* is not from any selfish attachment; therefore when there is no such sacrifice and the animals are killed out of selfish attachment, then that is real *hiṁsā;* there is no other opinion in this. Smoke arises from a fire when fuel is placed in it; and smoke is not seen when no fuel is added. So, O Munisattama! The *hiṁsā* as prescribed in the *Vedas*, is free from all blemishes, selfish attachment, etc., and therefore it is unblameable. So it follows the *hiṁsā* committed by persons attached to objects is the real *hiṁsā;* that can be blamed, but the *hiṁsā* of those persons who have no desires is not that sort of *hiṁsā*.

Therefore the learned men that know the *Vedas* declare that the *hiṁsā* done by the dispassionate persons, with their hearts free from egoism, is no *hiṁsā* done at all. O Dvija! Really speaking, the killing of animals done by the householder attached to senses and their objects, and done under their impulses can be taken into account as a real act of killing; but O Mahābhāga, of those whose hearts are not attached to anything of those self-controlled persons, desirous of *mokṣa*, if they do an act of *hiṁsā* out of a

sense of duty, with no desires of fruits and with their hearts free from egoism, that can never be reckoned as a real act of killing.'

Thus ends the 18th Chapter of the 1st Skandha on Janaka's giving instructions on truth to Śūkadeva in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam.

Chapter XIX—the marriage of Śūka

1-4. Śrī Śūka said: 'O king! This great doubt arises in my mind: how a man can be free from desires and the rewards of their actions when he lives in the midst of this *saṁsāra*, that is all full of Māyā? When even by the acquiring of wisdom of the *śāstras* and the capability to judge which is real and which is unreal, the delusion of the mind is not dispelled until one resorts to the practice of *yoga*, how then can freedom from desires and liberation come to a householder? The darkness of a room is not destroyed by the mere mention of lamplight; so the wisdom acquired by reading the *śāstras* can never dispel the darkness of delusion that reigns inside of a man. O lion of kings! If one wants *mokṣa*, one ought not to commit any act of revenge or injury or killing any being; how can this be possible to a householder?

5-17. Your desires to acquire wealth, to enjoy royal pleasures and to get victory in battle have not yet subsided; how then can you be a *jivanmukta?* O king! You consider yet a thief, thief and a saint, saint; you consider a man as your relative or other than that; these ideas have not vanished from you; how then can you be called Videha? O king! You feel the pungent, bitter, astringent, sour tastes and the like; you feel good and bad *rasas* respectively; you become glad when success comes to you and you feel sorrow when you happen to fail; and you experience the three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming and deep sleep—as an ordinary man does; how then can you be called to attain the *turīya* (fourth) state?

May I ask whether you cherish this idea that 'all these infantries, cavalries, chariots, and that all these elephants are mine, I am the lord of all the

wealth and things'? Or do you not cherish this idea? O king! I think you eat sweet and good things, and at times feel pleasure and at other times, feel pain! So, O king! How can you look on the garland of flowers and the snake as one and the same? O king! He who is a Muktapuruṣa considers a lump of earth, a piece of stone, and gold as of one and the same value; he considers everything to be the same *ātmān* and does good to all the beings. Whatever that may be, I do not find any pleasure at present with houses, wife, etc., or with anything, in fact. What my heart's desire is that I roam alone always without any desires in my heart. Therefore I like not to have any companion; to be free from any attachment and to be peaceful, and calm; I do not wish to accept anything from anybody; I will forego all pleasures and pains from cold, warmth, etc., and I will sustain my life on roots, fruits, and leaves, obtained without any effort and will roam as I like, like a deer. When I have not got the least attachment to the household life and when I am beyond all the attributes, what necessity have I then of house, wealth or a suitable wife? And when you think of various things with loving heart, and yet say that you are a *jivanmukta*, that is nothing but a mere vanity of yours! O king! When you think and become anxious about your enemies, about your wealth or sometimes about your army, how then can you be said to be free from cares? What more can be said than the fact that many Munis, eating moderately and controlling their senses, and leading an anchorite's life, and knowing the unreality of the world, fall victims to the Māyā!

18-27. Then what need there is to talk of you? O king! know that the hereditary title Videha to your line of kings indicates downright insincerity; nothing can be other than this as the name *vidyādhara* (holder of knowledge) is applied to an illiterate man; as the name *divākara* (sun) is given to a born-blind man, as the name Lakṣmīdhara (holder of wealth) is given to even a poor man, as these names are quite useless to me. I have heard that the kings of your family who were your predecessors were called Videha in name only and not in deed. O king! In your family there reigned a king named Nimi. Once on a time that royal sage invited his *guru* Vasiṣṭha to perform a sacrifice. When Vasiṣṭha said: "I am already invited

by Indra, the lord of the Devas, to perform his sacrifice; so O king! let me first finish his work; I will then take up your work. Better go on collecting the sacrificial materials till that work is complete."

Thus saying, Vasiṣṭha went away to perform Indra's sacrifice; on the other hand, the royal sage Nimi selected another priest and made him his *guru* and began his sacrifice. Hearing all this, Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha became angry and cursed him thus: "O forsaker of your *guru!* For the crime of forsaking your *guru*, let thy body be destroyed today!" At this, the royal sage, too, cursed Vasiṣṭha in his turn "Let your body fall off also." Then the bodies of both the persons fell. But, O king! this curiosity came to my mind, how the royal sage, whose body fell before, cursed his own *guru* afterwards.'

28-35. Janaka said: 'O Lord of Brahmāṇas! what you have said is, in my opinion, all quite true; nothing is false. Still hear. Know what my most worshipful Gurudeva has spoken to me is, in fact, true (and nothing else). You are now intending to quit the company of your father and go to the forest; well and good! but even then you will undoubtedly have the company of deer, etc.; see also, that when the five elements—earth, water, air, etc.—are present, encompassing everywhere, how then can you expect to be free from all companions? So, O Muni! when you will have to think always of your food, how, then, can you be said to be free from all cares?

Again, even if you go to the forest, you will have to think there also for your staff, deerskin, etc.; so you can take my case, too, of thinking of my kingdom, whether I think or not, as your thinking of staff, deerskin, etc., your heart is tainted with *vikalpa-jñāṇa* (knowledge of doubt, duality, etc.); and therefore you have come here from a far-off country. But my heart is free from any such doubt and I am remaining quite cheerful here. O best of Brahmāṇas! I have got no doubt whatsoever on any point, and therefore I take my food and go to sleep with great pleasure. "I am not bound up by this world" this idea gives me constant happiness of the highest degree. But you consider that you are bound and therefore you feel always constant pain. So leave off your idea that you are bound, and be happy.

"This body is mine" this knowledge leads to my bondage; and "This body is not mine" this knowledge leads to freedom so know this verily that all this wealth, kingdom, etc., are not mine.'

36-45. Sūta said: "Hearing these words of the royal sage, Śūkadeva became exceedingly glad and pronounced 'Sadhu! Sādhu!' (A true saint, indeed a true saint, well said) and went away without any delay to the pleasant *āśrama* of Vyāsa. Vyāsa, too, seeing his son come back, became very glad, embraced him, took the smell of his head and asked about his welfare again and again.

Then Śūkadeva, well conversant with the *śāstras* and ever ready in studying the *Vedas*, sat by the side of his father with an enlightened mind in his lovely *āśrama,* and thinking of the state of the high-souled Janaka in his kingdom, began to feel the highest peace. Though Śūka adopted the path of *yoga*, yet he married the daughter of a Muni named Pivarī, very beautiful, fortunate, enhancing the glory of her father's family. Then were born first the four sons named Kṛṣṇa, Gauraprabha, Bhūri and Devaśruta out of the sperm of Śūka and the ovum of Pivari; and next a daughter was born named Kīrti of them. Vyāsa's son Śūka, endowed with the fire of asceticism gave the daughter Kīrti in marriage in due time with the high-souled Anūha, the son of Vibhrāja. As time passed on, a son was born of the womb of Kīrti and the sperm of Anūha, a son who became the powerful king Brahmadatta, the knower of Brahman and endowed with wealth and prosperity. Some time elapsed when Anūha, the son-in-law of Śūkadeva, getting from Nārada the *māyā-bīja* (*aiṁ*) and highest knowledge of *yoga,* handed over his kingdom to his son, went to the hermitage of Vadarikā and became liberated. The Devarṣī Nārada gave him the the *bīja-mantra* of Māyā; and by the influence of that *mantra* and by the grace of the Devī, the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman arose in him without any obstacle and gave him liberation.

46-51. On the other hand Śūkadeva, always averse to any company, left his father and went to the beautiful mountain Kailāśa. He began to meditate

on the unmoving Brahman and thus remained there. After some time the highly energetic Śūkadeva attained *siddhi* (supernatural powers): *animā, laghimā*, etc., rose up high in the air from the top of the mountain and began to roam there, and then he appeared like a second Sun. When Śūka arose from the peak, it severed into two and various ominous signs became visible. When Śūkadeva, appearing like a second Sun by the dazzling brilliancy of his body, suddenly vanished away like air and became diluted in the Paramātman, entering into everything and became invisible, then the Devarṣis began to chant hymns to him. On the other hand, Vyāsadeva became very much distressed with the separation from his son, and cried out frequently "Oh, my son! Alas! my son Where are you gone?" went to the summit of the mountain where Śūka did go and wept bitterly. Then Śūkadeva, who was then residing as the Paramātman, the internal controller of all the beings and with all the beings, knowing Vyāsadeva as very much fatigued, distressed, and crying, spoke out as an echo from the mountains and trees thus: "O Father! There is no difference between you and me, considered in the light of *ātman;* then why are you weeping for me?"

52-59. Even today the above echo is clearly heard (almost daily). Seeing Vyāsadeva grieved very much for the separation from his son and always crying 'O my son! O my son!' Bhagavān Maheśvara came there and consoled him saying 'O Vyāsadeva! your son is the foremost of the *yogīs;* he has attained the highest state, so very rare to the ordinary persons that are not self-controlled. So do not be sorry any more. O Sinless One! when you have realized the *brahma-tattva*, then you ought not to express any sorrow for your Śūka who is now stationed in that Brahman. Your fame is now unrivalled, only on account of your having got a son like him.'

Vyāsadeva said: 'O Lord of the Devās! O Lord of the world! What am I to do now? My grief does not quit my heart somehow or other. My eyes are as yet satisfied in seeing my son; they like still to see him.'

Hearing these sorrowful words of Vyāsa, Bhagāvan Mahādeva said: 'O Muni Sārdula! I grant this boon to you that you will see the form of your son abiding in shadow, very beautiful, by your side. O Destroyer of enemies! Now abandon your grief by seeing that shadow form of your son.'

When Bhagavān Maheśvara said so, Vyāsa began to see the bright shade form of his son. Granting thus the boon, Bhagavān Mahādeva vanished then and there. When He vanished away, Vyāsa became very much distressed with sorrow for the bereavement of his son, and returned with heavy heart to his own hermitage."

Thus ends the nineteenth chapter of the first Skandha on the description of the marriage of Śūka in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter XX—Vyāsa's duties

1-8. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! What did Vedavyāsa do, when the highest Deva-like *yogī* Śūka acquired all the excellent supernatural powers? Kindly describe all these in detail."

Hearing this question, Sūta spoke: "O Ṛṣis! Vyāsa already had with him many disciples like Asita, Devala, Vaiśampāyana, Jaimini, Sumantu and others, all engaged in the study of the *Vedas*. After their studies were complete, they all went out to propagate *dharma* on the earth. Then Vyāsa , seeing that the disciples went to the earth and his son Śūkadeva had got to the next world, became very much distressed with sorrow and wanted to go to some other place. He then decided to go to his birthplace, and went to the banks of the Ganges. There he remembered his auspicious mother Satyavatī, forsaken by him before, very sorrowful, and the daughter of a fisherman. He then quit that heaven-like mountain, the source of all happiness and came to his own birthplace. Reaching the island where he was born, he enquired the whereabouts of the beautiful faced fisherman's

daughter as well the wife of a king. The fishermen replied that their king had given her in marriage to the king Śantanu. Then the king of fishermen, seeing Vyāsa there, gladly worshipped him and gave him a cordial welcome and spoke with folded palms, thus:

9-16. 'O Muni! When I have become so fortunate as to see you, rare even to the Devas, then my birth has been sanctified today and you have purified my family. O Brahmāṇa! Kindly say what for have you come? My wife, son, all my riches and every other thing that I have are at your disposal.'

Thus hearing the history of his mother Satyavatī, Vyāsa erected an *āśrama* on the beautiful banks of the river Sarasvatī and remained there in *tapasyā* with an enlightened mind.

Some time elapsed when the highly energetic Śantanu got through his wife Satyavatī two sons. Vyāsadeva considered them as his two brothers and became very glad, though he himself used to live in the forest. The first son of the king Śantanu was Chitrāngada, endowed with all auspicious qualities, exceedingly beautiful and tormenting his foes; the second son was Vichitravīrya; he was endowed with all qualities. The king Śantanu became very happy to get these children. Śantanu had one son before through his wife Gaṅgā; he was a great hero and very powerful; and the two sons of Satyavatī were equally powerful. The high–souled Śantanu now seeing the three sons, all endowed with all auspicious qualities, began to think that the Devas were incapable to defeat him.

17-34. After some time, the religious Śantanu quit his worn-out body as a man quits his clothes worn out in due time. After king Śantanu had ascended the Heavens, the energetic Bhīṣma performed duly his funeral obsequies and gave various things in charity to the Brahmāṇas. He did not accept the kingdom himself; but placed Chitrāngada on the throne and became known by the name of Devavrata (truthful in vow like the Devas). The pure souled Chitrāngada born of Satyavatī became so much powerful by sheer force of his arms, and became so great a hero that the enemies felt endless troubles. Now once on an occasion, the greatly powerful

Chitrāngada, surrounded by a great army, went on an hunting excursion to the forest in quest of *rurū* deer, etc., when the Gandharva Chitrāngada, seeing the king on the way, alighted from his chariot.

O ascetics! A fierce battle then ensued for three years on that sacred and wide expanse Kurukṣetra between the two heroes, both equally powerful. In the battle, the king Chitrāngada the son of Śantanu was slain by the Gandharva Chitrāngada and went up to Heavens.

Bhīṣma, born of the womb of Gaṅgā, hearing the above news, expressed his sorrows and surrounded by the ministers, completed all the funeral obsequies and installed Vichitravīrya on the throne. The beautiful Satyavatī became very much agitated by the death of her son; but when the ministers and the high-souled spiritual teachers consoled her, she became glad when she saw that her youngest son became king. Vyāsadeva, too, felt himself glad to hear that his youngest brother had been made king. After some time when the all-auspicious Satyavatī's son Vicitravīrya attained his youth, Bhīṣma began to think of his marriage. At this time the king of Kāsī (Kāśīrāj) called a *svayaṁvara* assembly (where the kings are invited and the bride selects the bridegroom) for the marriage of her three daughters, endowed with all auspicious qualities, at one and the same time. Thousands of kings and princes from various countries were invited there in the assembly; and worshipped duly, they went and decorated the hall.

At that time the highly energetic fiery Bhīṣma alone, mounting on his chariot, attacked the infantry and cavalry, defeated all the kings assembled there, and perforce carried away the three daughters of Kāśīrāj and took them to Hastināpur. Bhīṣma behaved towards those three daughters as if they were mothers, sisters or daughters and informed Satyavatī without any delay of everything that had happened.

35-39. Then he called for the astrologers and Brahmāṇas, versed in the *Vedas* and enquired about the auspicious day for their marriage. When the day was fixed and when every preparation was made, the religious Bhīṣma wanted Vichitravīrya to marry them. At this time the eldest daughter,

beautiful-eyed spoke out modestly to the Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma: 'O Gaṅgā's son, the illustrious son of your family and the best of the Kurus! You are the best knower of *dharma;* therefore what more shall I say to you? In the Svayaṁvara assembly I mentally selected Śālva and it struck me that he, too, looked on me with a very loving heart towards me. So, O tormentor of foes! Now do what is fit for that sacred family; O Gaṅgā's son! Not only you are extraordinarily powerful but you are also the foremost of the religious. Śālva mentally wanted to marry me; now do as you like.'

40-44. When the eldest daughter spoke thus, Bhīṣma asked the aged Brahmāṇas, ministers and his mother 'What ought to be done now?' and, taking the opinions of all, spoke to that daughter: 'O beautiful one! You can go wherever you like.' Thus saying, Bhīṣma released her. Then the beautiful daughter of Kāsīrāj went to the house of Śālvarāj and expressed to him her heart's desire: 'O great king! Knowing me attached to yourself, Bhīṣma has quit me according to the laws of *dharma;* I have therefore come to you now; marry me. O best of the kings! I will be your legal wife, for already I used to think you as my husband you, too, must have thought me your wife.'

45-47. Śālva replied as follows: 'O beautiful one! When Bhīṣma caught hold of your arm before me and took you to his chariot, then I won't marry you. You can say yourself: what intelligent man can marry a woman touched by another? Therefore I won't marry you, though Bhīṣma has quit you, in the light of another.' Hearing these words of Śālva, the daughter of Kāsīrāj wept bitterly; yet Śālva quit her. Therefore, finding no other way, she went back to Bhīṣma weeping, and said as follows:

48-50. O great warrior! Śālva did not consent to marry me, as you first took me to the chariot and afterwards left me. So, O Mahābhāga! You better look to *dharma* and marry me, as you know best what is *dharma*. If you do not marry me, I will certainly quit my life.'

Hearing her words Bhīṣma said: 'O beautiful one! How can I accept you, when your mind has become attached towards another? So, O fair one! You

better go back soon to your own father with a calm, clear mind.' When Bhīṣma said thus, that daughter of Kāsīrāj did not go back, out of sheer shame, to her father's house, but went to a forest and in a greatly solitary place of pilgrimage began to practice asceticism.

51-56. Now the other two daughters of Kāsīrāj, beautiful and all-auspicious Ambālikā and Ambikā became the wives of the king Vicitravīrya. Thus the powerful king Vicitravīrya began to enjoy various pleasures in the palace and in the gardens, and thus passed his time. For full nine years the king Vicitravīrya enjoyed sexual pleasures, and became attacked with consumption and fell into the jaws of death. Hearing the death news of her son Vicitravīrya, Satyavatī became very sorry. Surrounded by her ministers, she performed his funeral obsequies. Then she spoke privately to Bhīṣma with a grievous heart: 'O highly fortunate son! now you better govern your father's kingdom and see that the family of Yayāti does not become extinct. So better take your brother's wife and try your best to continue your family line.'

57-74. Bhīṣma then said: 'O Mother! Did you not hear of the promise that I already made before my father? So I cannot ever marry and govern the kingdom.'

Hearing these words of Bhīṣma, Satyavatī became anxious. She began to think as follows: 'How now the continuity of the family be kept! And it is not advisable to remain idle when the kingdom has become kingless; no happiness can be derived in this state.'

Thus thinking, she became exceedingly distressed; then the Gaṅgā's son, Bhīṣma spoke to her: 'O respected one! Do not worry your mind with cares; now take steps so as to secure a son from Vicitravīrya's wife. Call some best Brahmāṇa, born of a good family and unite him with Vicitravīrya's wife. There is no fault, as far as I know, in doing thus to keep up the family line. O sweet smiling one! Thus having begotten the grandson, give him this kingdom; I will also obey his commands.'

Hearing these reasonable words of Bhīṣma, Satyavatī remembered her own son, the sinless Vyāsadeva, who was born to her during her virginity. As soon as Vyāsa was remembered, he, the great ascetic and effulgent like the sun, came there and bowed down to his mother. The highly energetic Vyāsa was then worshipped duly by Bhīṣma, welcomed by Satyavatī and began to rest there like a smokeless fire.

The mother Satyavatī then spoke to the chief Muni: 'O son! Now procreate a beautiful son from your sperm and the ovum of Vicitravīrya's wife.' Hearing the mother's words, Vyāsa considered them as Vedic injunction and thought they must be obeyed and promised before her that he must obey and fulfil her orders. He remained there, waiting for the menstruation period. When the due period of menstruation arrived, Ambikā bathed and had a sexual intercourse with Vyāsa and begot a very powerful son, but a blind one (since she closed her eyes at the sight of Vyāsa during her intercourse).

Seeing the son born blind Satyavatī became exceedingly sorry; she, then, asked her other son's wife: "Go soon and get a son born of you in the aforesaid manner." When the menstruation period arrived, Ambālikā during the night time went to Vyāsa and mixed and became pregnant. In due time a son was born; that child became of a very pale color; so Satyavatī thought the new child, too, unfit for the kingdom; therefore at the end of the year again asked her son's wife Ambālikā to go to Vyāsa . She asked Vyāsa also for the same purpose and sent Ambālikā to his bedroom.

But Ambālikā became afraid, and could not go herself but sent her maidservant for the purpose. Thus from the womb of the maidservant the high-souled Vidura was born, having *dharma's* parts and the most auspicious towards all. Thus Vyāsa begot three very powerful sons Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura for the continuity of the family line.

O sinless Maharṣis! Thus I have described to you how my *guru* Vyāsadeva, who knows well all the *dharma*, kept up the continuity of his family and

how he begot sons in the womb of his brother Vicitravīrya's wives, according to the laws of *dharma*, to keep up a family.

Thus ends the twentieth chapter of the 1st Skandha on Vyāsa doing his duties, as well as the first Skandha in the MahāPurāṇam Śrī Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Second Skandha

Chapter I—the birth of Matsyagandhā

1-5. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sūta! Your words sound wonderful to us indeed! but you have not as yet definitely spoken to us the original events in detail; so a great doubt has arisen in our minds. We know that the king Śantanu married Vyāsa's mother Satyavatī. Now tell us in detail how Vyāsa became her son. How such a chaste woman Satyavatī, remaining in her own house, came to be married again by Śantanu? and how the two sons came to be born of Śantanu's sperm and Satyavatī's ovum? Now O highly fortunate Suvrata, kindly describe in detail this highly sanctifying historical fact. These Ṛṣis, who are observing vows, are desirous to hear of the birth of Vedavyāsa and Satyavatī."

6-23. Sūta said: "I bow down with devotion to the Highest Primordial Force, the bestower of the fourfold aims of existence of human life, who grants to all their desires when so prayed by the help of the *vāgbhava bīja-mantra* (***aiṁ***) with their heart and soul, for the success of all their desires. This *bīja* is so potent in its effect that even pronounced very lightly, even under a pretext, it grants all *siddhis*. So the Devī should be remembered by all means; and now saluting Her, I begin my narration of the auspicious Purānic events.

In days gone by there reigned a king, named Uparichara; he ruled over the Chedi country and respected the Brahmāṇas; he was truthful and very religious. Indra, the lord of the Devas, became very pleased by his asceticism and presented him an auspicious celestial air-car made of pearls and crystals, helping him in doing what he liked best. Mounting on that divine chariot, that religious king used to go everywhere; he never remained on earth; he used to remain always in the atmosphere and therefore be was nicknamed "Uparichara Vasu" (moving in the upper

regions). He had a very beautiful wife, named Girikā; and five powerful sons of indomitable vigor were born to him.

The king give separate kingdoms to each of his sons and made them kings. On one occasion Girikā, the wife of the Uparichara Vasu, after her bath after the menstruation and becoming pure, came to the king and informed him of her desire to get a son; but that very day his Pitṛs (ancestors) requested him also to kill deer, etc., for their *śrāddha* (solemn obsequies performed in honor of the manes of deceased ancestors). Hearing the Pitṛs, the king of Chedi became somewhat anxious for his menstruous wife; but thinking his Pitṛs words more powerful and more worthy to be obeyed, went out on an hunting expedition to kill deer and other animals, with the thought of his wife Girikā in his breast. Then while he was in the forest, he remembered his Girikā, who was equal in her beauty and loveliness to Kamalā, and the emission of virile semen took place. He kept this semen on the leaf of a banyan tree and thought "How the above semen be not futile; my semen cannot remain unfruitful; my wife has just now passed her menstruous condition; I will send this semen to my dear wife." Thus thinking the time ripe, he closed the semen under the leaves of the banyan tree, and charging it with *mantra* power addressed a falcon close by thus: 'O highly fortunate one! Take this my virile semen and go to my palace. O Beautiful one! Do this my work: take this semen and go quick to my palace and hand it over to my wife Girikā for today is her menstruation period.'

24. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Thus saying, the king gave that leaf with the virile semen therein to the falcon, who is capable of going quick in the air, took it and immediately rose high up in the air.

25-26. Another falcon, seeing this one flying in the air with leaf in his beak, considered it to be some piece of flesh and fell upon him. Immediately a gallant fight ensued between the two birds with their beaks.

27. While the fighting was going on, that leaf with virile semen fell down from their beaks on the waters of the Yamuṇā river. Then the two faIcons flew away as they liked.

28-39. O Ṛṣis! While the two falcons were fighting with each other, one Apsarā (celestial nymph) named Adrikā came to a Brahmāṇa who was performing his *sandhyā-vandanam* on the banks of the Yamuṇā. That beautiful woman began to bathe in the waters, took a plunge for playing sports and caught hold of the feet of the Brahmāṇa. The Dvija, engaged in *prāṇāyāma*, saw that the woman had amorous intentions, and cursed her, saying: 'As you have interrupted me in my meditation, so be a fish.'

Adrikā, one of the best Apsarās, thus cursed, assumed the form of a fish Safari and spent her days in the Yamuṇā waters. When the virile semen of Uparichara Vasu fell from the beak of the falcon, that fish Adrikā came quickly, ate it and became pregnant. When ten months passed, a fisherman came there and caught in a net that fish Adrikā. When the fish's belly was torn asunder, two human beings instantly came out the the womb. One was a lovely boy and the other a beautiful girl. The fisherman was greatly astonished to see this. He went and informed the king of that place who was Uparichara Vasu that the boy and the girl were born of the womb of a fish. The king also was greatly surprised and accepted the boy who seemed auspicious. This Vasu's son was highly energetic and powerful, truthful and religious like his father and became famous by the name of the king Matsyarāja. Uparichara Vasu gave away the girl to the fisherman. This girl was named Kāli and she became famous by the name of Matsyodarī. The smell of the fish came out of her body and she was named also Matsyagandhā. Thus the auspicious Vasu's daughter remained and grew in that fisherman's house."

The Ṛṣis said: "The beautiful Apsarā cursed by the Muni turned into a fish; she was afterwards cut asunder and eaten up by the fisherman. Very well! What happened afterwards to that Apsarā? How was she freed of that curse? and how did she go back to the Heavens?"

Thus questioned by the Ṛṣis, Sūta spoke as follows: "When the Apsarā was first cursed by the Muni, she was greatly astonished; she began to weep and cry like one greatly distressed and afterwards began to praise him. The

Brahmāṇa, seeing her weeping, took pity on her and said: 'O good one! Don't weep; I am telling you how your curse will expire. As an effect of having incurred my wrath, you will be born as a fish and when you will give birth to two human children, you will be freed of your curse.'

The Brahmāṇa having spoken thus, Adrikā got a fish-body in the waters of the Yamuṇā. Afterwards she gave birth to two human children and became freed of the curse when she, quitting the fish form, assumed a divine form and went up to the Heavens. O Ṛṣis! The beautiful girl Matsyagandhā thus took her birth and was nourished in the fisherman's house and grew up there. When the extraordinarily lovely girl of Vasu, Matsyagandhā attained her youth, she continued to do all the household duties of the fisherman and remained there."

Thus ends the first chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Matsyagandhā in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—the birth of Vyāsadeva

1-10. "Once on an occasion, the highly energetic Parāśara Muni went out on pilgrimage and arrived on the banks of the Yamuṇā, and spoke to the religious fisherman who was taking his food then thus: 'O fisherman! Take me on your boat and carry me to the other side of the river.' Hearing this, the fisherman spoke to the beautiful girl Matsyagandhā: 'O beautiful smiling one! This religious ascetic intends to cross the river; so take the boat and carry him to the other bank.' Thus ordered by her father, the exceedingly beautiful Vasu girl Matsyagandhā began to steer the boat whereon sat the Muni. Thus while the boat was sliding on the waters of the Yamuṇā, the Parāśara saw the beautiful-eyed damsel Matsyagandhā and became as if under the command of the great destiny, greatly enamored of her. He desired to enjoy Matsyagandhā, full of youth and beauty, and with his right hand caught hold of her left hand; the blue colored Matsya looking askance spoke out smilingly in the following words: 'O knower of

Dharma! What are you going to do, pierced by the arrows of Cupid? What you desire now, is it worthy of your family or your study of the *śāstras* or worthy of your *tapasyā?* See, you are born in the line of Vasiṣṭha and you are well known as of good character. O best of Brahmāṇas! You are quite aware that the attaining of a human birth in this world is very rare; and over and above this, the attainment of Brahmāṇahood is, as far as my knowledge goes, particularly difficult.

11-14. O Prince of Brahmāṇas! You are the foremost and best as far as your family, goodness, and learning in the *Vedas* and other *śāstras* are concerned; you are well-versed in *dharma;* how is it, then, that you are going to do this act, not worthy of an *ārya*, though you see me possessed of this bad smell of fish throughout my body. O one of unbaffled understanding! O best of the twice-born! What auspicious sign do you see in my body that you are stricken with passion on my account that you have caught hold of my hand to enjoy me? Why have you gotten your own *dharma?'*

Thus saying, Matsyagandhā thought within herself: 'Alas! This Brahmāṇa has certainly lost his brains in order to enjoy me; certainly he will be drowned just now in his attempt to enjoy me in this boat; his mind is so much agitated with the arrows of Cupid that nobody, it seems, can act against his will.' Thus thinking Matsyagandhā spoke again to the Muni: 'O highly fortunate one! Hold patience! let me first take you to the other side of the river; then you may do as you please.'

15-19. Hearing these reasonable words, the Muni let loose of her hand, took his seat on the boat and gradually got down on the other bank of the river. But the Muni, becoming again extremely passionate caught hold of Matsyagandhā; when the young woman spoke to Parāśara, in front of her, shuddering: 'O best of Munis! My body is emitting very bad smell; do you not feel this? You know very well that the sexual intercourse between male and female of similar types brings in happiness and comfort.' Thus spoken to, Parāśara made Matsyagandhā emit sweet scent like that of musk to a distance of one *yojana* (8 miles) and her body exceedingly lovely and

beautiful and, becoming extremely passionate, again caught hold of her right hand.

20-34. Then the auspicious Satyavatī addressed Parāśara Muni, resolved to enjoy her, thus: 'O Muni! Behold! all are looking at us; my father too, is there on the bank of the Yamuṇā; so, O Muni! wait till night. This beastly act before all is highly unsatisfactory to me. The wise persons declare it a great sin to commit sexual intercourse during day; they have ordained night time as the best time of intercourse for men not the daytime; the more so that many persons' eyes are in this direction. So, O intelligent one! hold on your passion for a while; for the blame pronounced by the public is horrible.'

Hearing these reasonable words, the liberal-minded Parāśara created, by his influence of *tapasyā*, a dense fog so that both the banks of the Yamuṇā became covered with darkness. Then Matsyagandhā gently spoke to the Muni: 'O best of Dvījas! I am not as yet married; I am now a girl; you will go away after enjoying me; your virile semen is not fruitless; so Brahmāṇa! What will be my fate? If I be pregnant today, what shall I say to my father? and what will be my future state? There is no doubt that, after enjoying me, you will go away; what will I do afterwards; kindly say.'

Hearing these words of Matsyagandhā, Parāśara said: 'O beloved! after you have done my pleasant duty, you will remain a girl as you are now; yet, O timid one! ask from me any boon you like; I will grant it to you.'

Satyavatī then said: 'O best Brahmāṇa, O giver of one's honor! grant me these things: That my father and mother do not know anything of this affair and that my virginity be again as ever the same. Also let an extraordinarily powerful energetic son be born to me like you; let this nice smell continue to remain always in my body and let my youth and beauty remain afresh and increase ever more.'

Hearing this, Parāśara said: 'O beautiful one! a son, very pure and holy, will be born to you, from Nārāyaṇa's part! his name will be famous in the

three worlds. O beautiful one! never before my heart was agitated with such passion. I do not know why I have become so much passionate for you. I saw the unrivalled beauties of Apsarās but I never lost my patience; but seeing you, I have become attracted to you; it must be under the direction of Providence; know it certain that there must be some mysterious cause in this. However Fate is unavoidable to all; otherwise you are full of so bad smell; why shall I be fascinated by your sight? O beautiful one! your son will be famed in the three worlds; will compose the *Purāṇas* and will sub-divide the *Vedas*.'

Thus saying, the Parāśara Muni enjoyed Matsyagandhā, who became quite submissive; and after bathing in the Yamuṇā, quickly went away. On the other hand, the chaste Satyavatī, too, became pregnant and immediately gave birth on the island of Yamuṇā to a son, beautiful as if the second Kāmadeva, the god of Love. No sooner that son, very fiery and highly potent, was born than he devoted his mind to *tapasyā* and spoke to his own mother Satyavatī thus: 'O Mother! now go wherever you like; I will also go to perform *tapasyā*. O highly fortunate one; No sooner you remember me, I will come to you. O Mother! where you will have any onerous duty, remember me and I will instantly come to you. Let all good be unto you; now I go. Avoid all cares and live happily.' Thus saying, Vyāsadeva went out. Matsyagandhā, too, went back to her father. Vyāsa was named also Dvaipāyana (born in an island) inasmuch as Satyavatī gave birth to him in a *dvīpa* (island); and as he was born of Viṣṇu's parts, he grew up as soon as he was born.

The Muni Dvaipāyana bathed in every *tīrtha* and performed the highest asceticism. Thus Dvaipāyana Vyāsa was born of Parāśara in Satyavatī's womb. Seeing the advent of Kaliyuga, he adorned the tree of the *Vedas* with many *śākhās* (branches). It is because he expanded the *Vedas* in many *śākhās*, that he is denominated also as Vedavyāsa; he composed eighteen *Purāṇas*, *Saṁhitās*, the excellent *Mahābhārata*, subdivided the *Vedas* and made his disciples Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, Vaisāmpāyan, Asita, Devala and his son Śuka to study them."

Sūta said: "O Munis! Thus I have described to you the birth of the holy Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī and all the causes. O Munis! Do not allow any doubt enter your mind as regards his birth; for it is always advisable to take up only the good things as far as the lives of great persons and Munis are concerned. There must be some extraordinary mysterious cause owing to which Satyavatī was born of a fish, and she was first united to Parāśara and then to Sāntanu. Otherwise how can one account for the fact of the Parāśara Muni being so much agitated by passion, and why he would behave like a mean low person in the committal of a grossly blameable act? Now has been spoken the wonderful birth story of Vyāsadeva together with all incidents, and enveloped under the great mystery. If any man hears this holy narrative, he will be freed from sins and will never fall into difficulties and will always be happy.

Thus ends the Second Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Vyāsadeva in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter III—the curse on Gaṅgā, Mahābhiṣa and Vasus

1-8. The Ṛṣis said: "O Sinless Sūta! You have described to us in detail the birth of Vyāsa of unrivalled fire, and of Satyavatī; but we have one great doubt in our minds, O Knower of *dharma!* which is not being removed by your words. O Sinless one! First, as regards the mother of Vyāsa, the all-auspicious Satyavatī, we have this doubt: how she came to be united to the virtuous Śantanu? The king Śantanu, of the family of Puru is a greatly religious man; how could he have married Satyavatī knowing her to be a fisherman's daughter and born of a low family? Now say who was the first wife of Śantanu and how Bhīṣma, the intelligent son of Śantanu came to be born of the parts of Vasu. O Sūta! You have told before that Bhīṣma, of indomitable valor, made Satyavatī's son, the brave Chitrāngada, king; and subsequent to his death made his younger brother Vicitravīrya king. But when the elder brother Bhīṣma, the greatly religious and beautiful was

present, how was it that Chitrāngada and Vicitravīrya, having been installed by Bhīṣma himself, could have reigned.

9-12. Again on the demise of Vicitravīrya, Satyavatī became very much grieved and got two sons born of her two son's wives by Vedavyāsa. How can we explain this fact? Why did she do this? Why did she not give the kingdom to Bhīṣma? Why did Bhīṣma not marry? And how was it that the elder brother Vyāsadeva, of indomitable valor, did such an irreligious act as to beget two (Goloka) sons from the wives of the brothers? Vyāsa composed the *Purāṇas* and knew everything of religion; how then did he go to other's wives, especially, of his brother's wives?

13-14. O Sūta! Why did Vyāsadeva do such a hateful act, in spite of his being a Muni? The actions of *Vedas* are inferred from their subsequent good conducts; how can this act of Vyāsa be calculated as one amongst them? O Intelligent one! You are the disciple of Vyāsa; therefore you are the best man to solve our doubts. We all of this *dharma-kṣetra* Naimiṣāraṇya are very eager to hear this."

15-39. At this Sūta said: "In ancient days there reigned a king named Mahābhiṣa, in the family of Ikṣvāku, endowed with all the qualities of a great king; he was the foremost of all the kings, truthful and religious. That highly intelligent king performed a thousand horse-sacrifices (Aśvamedhas) and one hundred Vājapeya sacrifices, and thereby satisfied Indra, the king of the Devas and went to Heaven. Once, on an occasion, that king went to the abode of Brahmā; the other gods also went there to serve Prajāpati. The great river, Gaṅgā Devī, too, assuming a feminine form, went to Brahmā to serve him. Now, in the interval, violent winds arose and the clothing of Gaṅgā Devī went off; at this the Devas did not look at her; rather kept their faces downwards; but the king Mahābhiṣa continued gazing at her. Gaṅgā also came to know the king and that he had become attached to her.

Brahmā, seeing that both of them are love-stricken and are shameless, became angry and cursed them immediately: 'O king! you better take your

birth again in the human world and practice great meritorious deeds and come again to this Heaven. Thus saying, Brahmā looked at Gaṅgā, who was attached to the king, and addressed her: 'You too better go to the human world and become his wife.' Both of them, the king as well as Gaṅgā, came out of Brahmā's abode, very much grieved in their hearts. The king Mahābhiṣa thought of coming to this world and reflected on the kings thereof, and settled to make the king Pratīpa of Puru's family his father.

At this time the eight Vasus with their wives, wandering in various places and enjoying as they liked, came to the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha. Amongst the aforesaid eight Vasus, Pṛthu and others, one Vasu Dyau's wife seeing Nandinī, the wish-fulfilling cow (Kāmadhenu) of Vasiṣṭha asked her husband: 'Whose is this excellent cow that I see?' Vasu then replied as follows: 'O Beautiful one! This is Vasiṣṭha's cow. Whoever, be he a man or woman drinks her milk gets his longevity extended to ten thousand years and his youth never ends.'

Hearing this, the Vasu's wife said: "There is a very beautiful comrade (*sakhī*) of mine, the daughter of the Rajarsī—Uśīna, of auspicious qualities. O Mahābhāga! Kindly bring to me from Vasiṣṭha's hermitage that auspicious sacrificial milch cow Nandinī together with her calf that yields all desires; my *sakhī* will then drink her milk and be thereby free from disease, old age and become the chief amongst all mankind.

Hearing thus, his wife's word, the Vasu Dyau, though sinless, stole away together with Pṛthu and the other Vasus the cow Nandinī in utter defiance of the self-controlled Muni Vasiṣṭha. When the cow Nandinī had been stolen, the great ascetic Vasiṣṭha came quickly to the hermitage with abundance of fruits.

The ascetic Muni Vasiṣṭha, not finding, his cow with her calf in his hermitage, searched for her in many forests and caves; but he, the son of Varuṇa, could not find out his cow even after prolonged searches; he, then, took recourse to meditation and came to know that the Vasus had stolen the cow and became angry. He expressed: "When the Vasus have stolen

this my cow in utter defiance of myself, they must be born amongst men." When the religious Varuṇa's son Vasiṣṭha thus cursed the Vasus, they became very sorry and absent-minded; all of them went to Vasiṣṭha's hermitage and saw him there; they began to supplicate him as much as they could; and took refuge under him. Seeing the Vasus standing before him in an extremely distressed condition, the virtuous Muni Vasiṣṭha said: 'You all will be free from the curse within one year; but the Vasu Dyau will dwell amongst men for a long, long period as he had stolen direct my Nandinī with her calf.'

40-60. While the Vasus, thus cursed, were returning, they saw on the way the chief river Gaṅgā Devī also cursed and therefore distressed; all of them bowed down to her simultaneously and said: 'O Devī! A serious thought is troubling our minds, how can we, who live on nectar, take our birth in human wombs; so, O best river! You better be a woman and give birth to us. O Sinless one! You better become the wife of the sage King Śantanu and no sooner we be born of your womb, kindly throw us in the river Gaṅgā (your water). If you do thus, O Gaṅgā we will certainly be freed of our curse.'

Gaṅgā Devī replied, 'Well; that will be.' Thus spoken, the Vasus went to their respective places; and Gaṅgā Devī, too, thinking on the subject again and again, went out of that place. At this time Mahābhiṣa became born as a son of the king Pratīpa and became known as Śantanu. He was exceedingly religious and true to his promise. One day while the King Pratīpa was praising Sūrya Devī (the sun) of unequalled energy, Gaṅgā Devī assumed an extraordinarily beautiful feminine form and came out of the waters and sat on the right thigh, resembling a *sāl* tree, of the king Pratīpa. The sage king Pratīp spoke out to the lady sitting on his right thigh, thus: 'O beautiful faced one! Why, unasked, have you sat on my auspicious right thigh?'

The lovely Gaṅgā then replied: 'Hear why I have sat here. O best of Kurus! O king! Becoming attached to you, I have sat on your thigh; so please

accept me.’ At this the king Pratīpa spoke to the beautiful lady, full of youth and beauty, ’I never go, simply out of passion to another’s wife. There is another point; you have sat on my right thigh; that is the seat of sons and son’s wives; so, when my desired son will be born, you will then, be my son’s wife. And certainly, by your good will, my son will be born.’

The lady, of divine form, said, Well; that will be done! and went away. The king returned to his palace, thinking of the lady. After some time, he had a son born to him and when the son attained his teens, the king desired to lead a forest life and communicated this matter to his son. He said also, if the aforesaid beautifully smiling girl comes to you to marry, then marry her. And I am also ordering you not to question her anything ’who are you’ and so forth. If you take her as your legal wife, you will certainly be happy.

Thus saying to his son, the king Pratīpa handed over all his kingdom to his son and gladly retired into the forest. The king practiced *tapasyā* in the forest and worshipped Ambikā; on quitting his mortal coil, he went by his sheer merit to the Heavens. The highly energetic king Śantanu, on getting his kingdom, began to administer justice according to the laws of *dharma* and governed his subjects.”

Thus ends the third Chapter of the Second Skandha on the description of the curse on Gaṅgā, Mahābhiṣa and Vasus in the MāhaPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter IV—the birth of the Vasus

1-8. Sūta said: “Upon the king Pratīpa ascending to the Heavens, the truly heroic king Śantanu went out hunting tigers and other forest animals. Once, while he was roaming in a wild wilderness, he saw a fawn-eyed well decorated beautiful woman on the banks of the Ganges. No sooner the king Śantanu saw her than he became addicted to her, and thought within himself thus: ’Certainly my father spoke of this beautiful-faced woman who is looking like a second Lakṣmī, endowed with beauty and youth.’

The king could not rest satisfied simply with seeing the lotus-like face. The hairs on his body stood on end and his heart was very much attracted to her. Gaṅgā Devī, too, knew him to be the king Mahābhiṣa and became, in her turn, very much attached to him. She then went smiling towards the king. Seeing the blue-colored lady looking askance at him, the king became very happy and consoled her in sweet words, saying: 'O, one of beautiful thighs! Are you Devī; Mānusī (human), Gandharvī, Yakshī, the daughter of Nāgas (serpents), or a celestial nymph? Whoever you may be, O beautiful one! be my wife; your sweet smiles, it seems, are brimful of love; so be my legal wife today.'

9-26. Sūta said: "The king Śantanu could not recognize the lady to be Gaṅgā; but Gaṅgā knew that he is the king Mahābhiṣa and is born as Śantanu. Hearing the above words of the king, Gaṅgā, out of her previous affections, spoke out to the king, smiling: "O king! I know that you are the son of the king Pratīpa. Behold! Though it is inevitable that woman will get their husbands, yet who is that beautiful lady that does not marry according to her liking and qualifications? But I can take you as my husband, if you make a certain promise to me. Hear my resolve; afterwards I will marry you. O king! Whatever I will do, be it good or bad, auspicious or inauspicious, you must not hinder or interrupt me nor ever say that is not to your liking and satisfaction. Whenever you will break this my resolve, I will instantly quit you and go wherever I like.'

The king Śantanu, then, said: 'Well! That will be,' and promised to the above effect; then Gaṅgā Devī recollected within herself Vasu's words and thought of the attachment of the king Mahābhiṣa and accepted Śantanu as her husband. Thus married to the king Śantanu, the beautiful Gaṅgā in human form went to his abode. The king, on having got possession of her, began to enjoy in pleasant gardens. The lady, too, appreciated his mental feelings and began to serve him to his satisfaction. Thus many years elapsed in lovely enjoyments and intercourses between the couple who looked like Indra and his pair Sachī; and they did not feel at all how the time passed. The lady endowed with all qualities and the clever king, well-

versed in the art of loving, began to enjoy incessantly, like Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa in Their divine palace.

Thus many years passed when the lovely-eyed lady became pregnant with the king Śantanu's sperm and, in due time, gave birth to a son who was a Vasu. No sooner the son was born than Gaṅgā Devī threw him in the waters of the Ganges. Thus the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sons were threwn successively on the waters. Then the king became very anxious and thought within himself: 'What am I to do now? How my family be preserved? This my wife, incarnate of sin, has killed my seven sons; if I now desist her, she will instantly leave me and go away. Now this is the eighth pregnancy as desired by me. Now if I do not interrupt her, she will certainly throw my son in the Ganges. Whether a son will be born again or not is doubtful; and even if that be born, it is doubtful whether she will preserve that child; now what am I to do in this doubtful point? However I will try my best to continue the thread of my family line.'

27-46. Now, in due time, the Vasu who, having been influenced by his wife had stolen Vasiṣṭha's cow Nandinī, became born as the eighth son of Gaṅgā Devī; the king Śantanu, seeing this son fell unto Gaṅgā's feet and said: 'O thin-bodied woman! I pray to you to give my life today; better nourish this my one son. O beautiful one! You killed in succession my seven exceedingly beautiful sons. O one of beautiful hips! I now fall at your feet. O beautiful one! save the life of this child of mine. If you ask from me any other thing to day, even that be very rare, I will give it to you; but you better now keep the thread of my family line. The Paṇḍitas, versed in the Vedas, say that he who has no issues cannot go to Heaven; so, O Beautiful one! Today I pray to you to keep the life of this my eighth son.'

Though thus begged by Śantanu, Gaṅgā Devī was eager to take away the son to throw in the waters; the king became very sorrowful and angrily spoke out 'O vile and vicious woman! What are you going to do? Do you not fear hell! of what villain are you the daughter, that you are always doing this vicious deed? O Sinner! go away wherever you will or remain

here as yon like, it matters little; but my son will remain here. When you attempt to bring my family to extinction, what use is there in living with you?'

When the king thus spoke to the woman who was ready to take away the son she angrily spoke as follows: 'O King! When you have acted against your promise, my word is broken and my connection with you has stopped from today. Therefore I will take this son to the forest, where I will nourish him. I am Gaṅgā; to fulfil God's work I have come here. The high-souled Vasiṣṭha cursed before the eight Vasus: "Better be born as men"; they became very anxious; and seeing me they prayed: "O Sinless one! let you be mother of us all." O best of kings! I granted them what they desired; and then for the purpose of serving god's ends, I became your wife. Know this my history. The seven Vasus already were born and were freed; now this is the last Vasu and he will remain here for some time as your son. O Śantanu! now take this son offered by Gaṅgā. Know this to be the Deva Vasu and enjoy the pleasure of having a son. O highly fortunate one! This son will be famous by the name of Gāngeya (Gaṅgā's son) and will be the most powerful of all. O King! Today I will take this son to the place where I chose you as my husband; I will nourish him and when he attains his youth, I will return him to you. For, this son, if deprived of mother, will not be happy nor will he live.'

Thus saying, Gaṅgā vanished with the son; the King Śantanu became very sorrowful and passed away his time in his palace. The king thought always of the separation from his wife and son and thus painfully governed his kingdom.

47-69. Thus some time passed on, when, once on an occasion, the king Śantanu went out hunting and killed with arrows buffaloes, boar, and other wild animals and came to the banks of the Ganges. Here he saw with great wonder that a boy was playing with a great bow and was shooting arrows after arrows. The king's attention was more attracted towards the boy, but whether that boy was his or not, did not at all come to his mind. Looking at

his extraordinary feats, his agility in shooting arrows with ease and quickness, his learning that can have no equal and his beautiful form, as if of Cupid, he became greatly surprised and asked him: 'O Sinless one! whose son are you?' The hero boy did not reply anything but went away shooting his arrows.

The king thought within himself 'Who is this boy? Whose son is he? What to do now? To whom shall I go now?' Thus pondering, he recollected within himself and began to recite verses in praise of Gaṅgā; Gaṅgā, assuming her beautiful form as before, became visible to the king. Seeing her, the king said: 'O Gaṅgā! Who is this boy that has just gone? Will you show him once more to me now?'

Hearing these words of Śantanu, Gaṅgā said: 'O king of kings! He is your son, he is that eighth Vasu. So long I have nourished him, and now I hand him over to you. O Suvrata! This is the great ascetic Gāngeya. He is the illustrious scion of your family. The glory of your line will be enhanced. I have taught him the whole science of archery. This pure son of yours dwelt in the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha and has become versed in all the *vidyās* and skilled in all the actions. Your this son knows everything that Jamadagni Paraśurāma knew. So, O king of kings! Take now your son and be happy.'

Thus saying, Gaṅgā gave him his son and vanished; the king also became very glad and embraced his son; he smelled his head and took him to his chariot and drove towards his own city. On returning to Hastināpur, the king held a great festival (*utsava*) in honor of the arrival of his son; he called all his astrologers and enquired what day was auspicious. He then called all his subjects and ministers, and installed Gāngeya as the Crown Prince. The religious Śantanu became very happy on making Gāngeya the Crown Prince; he forgot the pains due to Gaṅgā's bereavement.

Sūta said: "Thus I have described to you the cause of the curse on Vasus, the birth of Bhīṣma from the womb of Gaṅgā, the union of Gaṅgā and Śantanu, etc., He who hears in this world this holy story of Gaṅgā's birth and the birth of the Vasu, is freed of all sins and gets *mukti*. O Munis! I have

described these meritorious holy accounts, as I heard from the mouth of Vyāsa. Anybody who hears this holy *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, endowed with five characteristics and filled with various anecdotes, that came out of the mouth of Vyāsa, finds all his sins destroyed and attains peace and blessedness. O Munis! Thus has been described completely to you this holy history.

Thus ends the fourth Chapter on the birth of the Vasus in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter V—the marriage of Satyavatī

1-20. The Ṛṣis said: "O son of Romaharṣaṇa, O Sūta; you have described to us how the eight Vasus, cursed by Vasiṣṭha, took their birth and how Bhīṣma was born. O knower of *dharma!* Now describe to us in detail how the greatly religious king Śantanu married the auspicious Yojanagandhā, the chaste Satyavatī, the mother of Vyāsa, knowing full well that she was a fisherman's daughter? O Suvrata! Remove our this doubt."

Sūta then said: "The sage king Śantanu always used to go to forests on hunting expeditions, with his heart addicted to hunting buffaloes, deer and various other wild animals. Thus, for four years that king went out with his son Bhīṣma, hunting deer and other wild animals, and got the highest happiness as Mahādeva finds in company with Kārtikeya. Once, on an occasion, while he was shooting arrows at rhinoceros and boar etc., he went so far as to reach a forest on the banks of the Yamuṇā, the chief of the rivers. There he began to smell an excellent nice smell that could not be described in words; he tried to find out the source and wandered here and there, and on all sides of the forest; and thought that this enchanting smell was not that of Mandāra flowers, musk, *champaka* nor that of Mālatī nor that of Ketaki flower; the air was blowing saturated with peculiar fragrant smell that he never experienced before. Thus thinking of that smell, the

king Śantanu, being enchanted with that, followed to its source in that forest.

At last he came to a spot on the banks of the Yamuṇā the chief of the rivers, where a very beautiful girl, calm and quiet and with feminine gestures and posture amorous, lovely but ill-clad, was sitting; and he found out that the above beautiful smell was coming out of her body. The form of the lady was extremely beautiful; the smell was very wonderful, and captivating the hearts of all; her age then entered to youth and she was very auspicious. The king was greatly surprised and was eager to know who the lady was whence she had come, whether she was a Deva girl, a human, a Gandharva daughter or a Nāga daughter?

But being unable to come to a definite conclusion and becoming passionate, he remembered Gaṅgā and asked that lady sitting on the bank of the Yamuṇā, thus: 'O dear! Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Why are you alone in this lovely forest? O beautiful-eyed! Are you married? Or are you as yet unmarried? So answer to all these. O lovely-eyed one! Seeing your lovely enchanting form I am become extremely passionate. So, O dear! Describe in detail to me, who are you? and what do you intend to do?'

When the king spoke thus the lotus eyed nice-toothed lady replied as follows: 'O king! Know me as a fisherman's daughter and I am completely under my father's command. O king of kings! For *dharma's* sake I carry ferry across this Yamuṇā river. My father has gone today to our house. O Master of wealth! Thus I have spoken truth to you.' Thus saying the lady desisted; the passionate king then spoke to her: 'I am the foremost hero of the Kuru family; so choose me as your husband; then your this youth will not go in vain.

21-32. O fawn-eyed one! I have no other wife existing; so you will be my legal wife. O Dear! Passion is giving much pains to me; therefore I am now become your obedient servant forever. O Beloved! My former dear wife has

abandoned me and gone away; but I have not married since then. Now seeing you beautiful, in all respects, I cannot bring my mind under control.'

Hearing these nectar-like beautiful words of the king, the sweet-scented fisherman's daughter, though also turned extremely passionate, held patience and exclaimed: 'O king! I also desire that which you have expressed; I am of opinion to act according to your wishes. But, what am I to do? I am not independent. You are to know this. My father alone can give me in marriage to you. So better ask my father for me. Though I am a fisherman's daughter, still I am not wanton and wilful. I am always obedient to my father; if my father wills, you can marry me. And I will be obedient to you. O king! The god of love is tormenting me, who is endowed with youth; he does not torment you so much. Still I must regard my family manners and customs coming down from ancient times. I must hold my patience.'

Sūta said: "Thus passionately pleased with these fascinating words of the lady, the king went to the fisherman's house for the lady. Seeing the king coming, the fisherman was greatly bewildered and astonished, bowed down with great devotion and said: 'O King! I am Thy servant. I am blessed by Thy presence. O great King! Now be graciously pleased to order me the cause of Thy arrival.'

Hearing the fisherman's words, the King said: 'O sinless one! This I tell you truly that if you give me your daughter in marriage I will certainly make her my legal wife.'

The fisherman replied: 'O king! What must be given ever, how can I say that is not to be given. Therefore if Thou askest for my daughter, I will certainly give her to Thee. But, O great King! Thou wilt have to make her son the king of Thy kingdom; no other son of Thine could be king, after Thy absence.'

33-40. Hearing these words of the fisherman, the king Śantanu became very anxious. He remembered Gāngeya and could not speak anything. He,

being sick with love anxiously returned home; but he abandoned bathing, eating, sleeping, etc. At this, the son Gāngeya Bhīṣma, whose vow was equal to that of the gods, marking that the king was troubled with some thought, went to him and asked why he was anxious: 'O king! Say truly what is your anxiety; who is your enemy that is not conquered; whom do you went to bring under your control? O king! What use is there of having a son who does not understand the difficulties of his father, or does not try to remove these difficulties. A son can be called really the son who is born to repay the debts incurred by him in previous births; there is no manner of discussion in this. See, Raghu's son Dāsarathī Rāma abandoned his kingdom under the orders of his father and repaired to Chitrakūta forest with his brother Lakṣman and wife Sītā. The son of king Harischandra, Rohīta, ready to repay the debt of his father and sold by his father, worked as a servant at a Brahmāṇa's house. So the famous Śunahśephah, sold by his high-souled-father Ajigarta was tied for sacrifice in a sacrificial post; but he was afterwards freed by the Gādhi's son Viśvāmitra.

41-59. It is well known that, in ancient days, the Jamadagni's son Paraśurāma cut off his mother's head under the orders of his father. He considered the father's words more important, and hence could do such an unjust act. O king! This my body is at your disposal; I can certainly do what you order me to do. So say what am I to do? as long as I am living, you need not express any sorrow; if you permit, I will do what is even hardly practicable to do. O king! Say why you are anxious; I will remove that at once with this bow in my hand. If my body goes in carrying your maṇḍāte know that your desire will be fructified. Fie to that son, who, being capable, is averse to do what his father desires! What use is there in having a son who does not remove the cause of his father's anxiety?'

Hearing the words of the son, the king Śantanu felt much ashamed in his heart and said: 'O son! This is now my gravest care that you are my only son; besides you are a hero very powerful, honored and never showing your back in battles; therefore if out of ill-luck you become dead in some battlefield, I will become issueless; under such circumstances what am I to

do? So, O son! My life is fruitless when I have got only one son; this is my gravest care; therefore I am sorry. O son! I have no other cares that I can mention to you.'

Hearing these words of the father, Gāngeya called the old ministers and said, 'The king was too ashamed to speak out to me the real matter; so I ask you all to know exactly the king's cares and communicate them to me as they are; I can carry them out without any hitch.' At these Bhīṣma's words, the ministers went to the king, learned the true cause and spoke to Bhīṣma; learning this, he began to think what ought to be done.

The Gaṅgā's son Bhīṣma, then, accompanied by the ministers, quickly went to the house of the fisherman, and with words of humility and affection, spoke: 'O tormentor of foes! I pray to you to give your beautiful daughter in marriage to my father. Your daughter will be my mother and I will be her servant.'

The fisherman then said: 'O highly lucky prince! Then the king's son will not be able to become king, in your presence; so kindly marry yourself my daughter.' At this Bhisma again said: Let your daughter be my mother; I will never accept the kingdom. The son of your daughter will, no doubt, become king.'

The fisherman said: 'I know your words are true; but if your son be powerful, he can take forcibly the kingdom for himself.' At this Bhīṣma again said: 'O Sire! Know my words as true; I will never marry; from today I have accepted this difficult vow.'

Sūta said: "Hearing this firm resolve of Bhīṣma; the fisherman gave over his beautiful daughter to the king Śantanu. Thus Śantanu married the dear Satyavatī; but he was quite unaware of the wonderful birth of Vyāsadeva."

Thus ends the fifth Chapter of the second Skandha on the marriage of Satyavatī in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter VI—the birth of the Pāṇḍavas

1-12. Sūta said: "Thus Śantanu married Satyavatī; two sons were born to her but they died in course of time. Out of Vyāsadeva's semen, Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born. Ambikā Devī, the mother of Dhṛtarāṣṭra closed her eyes on seeing Vedavyāsa; hence Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born blind. Seeing Dhṛtarāṣṭra blind, Satyavatī asked Vyāsa to go to Ambālikā (Pāṇḍu's mother); the princess Ambālikā, mother of Pāṇḍu turned pale at the sight of Vyāsa; hence her son became of a pale color out of Vyāsa's wrath. Hence the name of the son was Pāṇḍu. Next the maidservant, expert in the science of amorous pleasures, satisfied Vyāsa; hence her son Vidura was born of *dharma's* part and became truthful and holy. Though Pāṇḍu was younger, the ministers installed him on the throne. Dhṛtarāṣṭra could not become king, as he was blind. By the permission of Bhīṣma the powerful Pāṇḍu obtained the sovereignty; and the intelligent Vidura became his minister.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra had two wives, Gāndhāri and SauBali; this SauBali was *vaiśya;* she was engaged in the household affairs. The king Pāṇḍu had two wives, too; the first was Kuntī, the daughter of Sūrasena; and the other was Mādrī, the daughter of the Madras king. Gāndhāri gave birth to one hundred beautiful sons; *vaiśyā* SauBali gave birth to one beautiful son named Yuyutsu. While Kuntī was a virgin, she gave birth, through the medium of the Sun, the lovely Karṇa; next she became the wife of Pāṇḍu."

Hearing this, the Ṛṣis said: "O Muni Sūta! What are you saying? First Kuntī brought forth a child and afterwards she was married to Pāṇḍu; this is wonderful, indeed! How was Karṇa, born of unmarried Kuntī? and how came Kuntī to be married afterwards? Describe all these in detail."

13-35. Sūta then said: "O Dvijas! While Sūrasena's daughter Kuntī was a virgin girl, the king Kuntībhoja asked for Kuntī, and Sūrasena gave her to the king Kuntībhoja, who brought up this beautifully smiling girl. He engaged her in the service of Agṇi of Agṇihotra.

Once on an occassion, Durvāsā Muni, engaged in the vow lasting for four months, came there; Kuntī served him during that period; the Muni became greatly pleased and gave her a very auspicious *mantra,* by virtue of which any Deva, when called upon by that *mantra* will come to Kuntī and satisfy her desires.

When the Muni went away, Kuntī, remaining in her house, wanted to test the potency of the *mantra* and asked within herself 'What Devatā to call upon?' Seeing the God Sūrya had arisen in the sky, Kuntī uttered the *mantra* and invoked him. The Sun, then, assuming an excellent human form, came down from the Heavens and appeared before Kuntī in the same room. Seeing the Deva Sun, Kuntī became greatly surprised and began to shudder and instantly became endowed with the inherent natural quality of passion (had menstruation). The beautiful-eyed Kuntī, with folded palms,spoke to Sūrya Deva standing before: 'I am highly pleased today seeing Thy form; now go back to Thy sphere.'

Sūrya Deva said: 'O Kuntī! What for you called me, by virtue of the *mantra?* Calling me, why do you not worship me, standing before you? O beautiful blue one! Seeing you, I have become passionate; so come to me. By means of the *mantra*, you have made me subservient, so take me for intercourse.'

Hearing this, Kuntī said: 'O Witness of all! O knower of *dharma!* You know that I am a virgin girl. O Suvrata! I bow down to you; I am a family daughter; so do not speak ill to me.'

Sūrya then said: 'If I go away in vain, I will be an object of great shame, and, no doubt, will be laughed amongst the gods; So, O Kuntī! If you do not satisfy me, I will immediately curse you and the Brahmāṇa who has given you this *mantra*. O Beautiful one! If you satisfy me, your virginity will remain; nobody will come to know and there will be born a son to you, exactly like me.'

Thus saying, Sūrya Deva enjoyed the bashful Kuntī, with her mind attracted towards him; He granted her the desired boons and went away. The beautiful Kuntī became pregnant and began to remain in a house, under great secrecy. Only the dear nurse knew that; her mother or any other person was quite unaware of the fact. In time, a very beautiful son like the second Sun and Kārtikeya, decked with a lovely Kavacha coat of mail and two earrings, was born there.

Then the nurse caught hold of the hand of the bashful Kuntī and said: 'O charming one! What care can you possibly have as long as I am living." Kuntī then, placed the son in a box and said: 'O son! What shall I do? Being afraid of shame, I am leaving you, though you are dear to me as my life itself! I am exceedingly unfortunate, that I am casting aside this all-auspicious son. May the attributeless Bhāgavatī Ambikā, the World Mother and the Lady of all, endowed with attributes, protect Thee! May Kātyāyani, the giver of all desires, feed you with Her milk! Alas! I am quitting you, born of Sūrya's semen in this solitary forest like a vitiated wanton woman. I do not know when shall I see your lotus-like beautiful face, dearest to me like my self. Alas! in my former birth I never worshipped Śivānī, the mother of the three worlds; I never meditated Her lotus like feet, the Giver of all happiness; hence I am so very unfortunate. O Dear son! I must perform great *tapasyā* to expiate for this terrible sin, that I knowingly commit in relinquishing you in the forest.'

36-48. Sūta said: "Thus saying to the son within the casket, Kuntī gave over that to the hands of her nurse, terrified lest some one might see her. Kuntī then bathed and remained with a fearful heart in her father's house. A carpenter named Adhiratha got accidentally that casket floating in the Ganges. The carpenter's wife Rādhā prayed for the son and nourished him under her care. Thus nourished in the carpenter's house, the famous Kuntī's son Karṇa became a very powerful warrior. The king Pāṇḍu then married Kuntī in a Svayaṁvara, a marriage in which the girl chooses her husband from among a number of suitors, assembled together. And the all-

auspicious daughter of the king of Madras became also the second wife of Pāṇḍu.

Once, on an occasion, the powerful Pāṇḍu, while hunting in the forest killed a Muni, in the form of a deer, engaged in the act of cohabitation, thinking it to be a deer. The dying Muni became inflated with wrath, cursed Pāṇḍu: 'If you cohabit, certainly you will die.' Thus cursed by the Muni, Pāṇḍu became very sorrowful, abandoned his kingdom and began to live in the forest. O Munis! His two wives Kuntī and Mādrī, followed their husband as chaste women do, to serve him in the forest. Dwelling in the hermitage of the Munis, Pāṇḍu listened to the *dharma-śāstras* and practiced severe penance.

Once while he was listening to the religious discourses of the Munis, he heard unmistakeably the Munis telling that the man who is sonless can never go to the Heavens; so he must get a son somehow or other. The Paṇḍitas declare that the sons born of the father's semen, the sons born of their daughters, the Kṣetraja, the Goloka, the Kuṇḍa, the Sahoda, the Kānīna, the Krīta, one obtained in the forest, or one offered by another father, unable to nourish his son, all are entitled to inherit the wealth of the father; but the sons enumerated successively are more and more inferior.

Kṣetraja - of a son, the offspring of the wife by a kinsman appointed to procreate issue to the husband.

Goloka - Bastard child of a widow.

Kuṇḍa - a child born in adultery.

Sahoda - the son of a woman pregnant at the time of marriage.

Kānīna - the son born of a young and unmarried woman.

Krīta - purchased

49-52. Hearing this, Pāṇḍu spoke to the lotus-eyed Kuntī to procreate sons for him soon by a great ascetic Muni: 'By my order, you will not incur any sin in doing this. I heard that in ancient times the high-souled kin Saudāsa got son from Vasiṣṭha.'

Kuntī, then spoke to the king: "O Lord! I know one *siddha-mantra;* it was given to me before by the Muni Durvāsā. Whichever Devatā I will invoke by that *mantra*, he will instantly come to my side, controlled by that *mantra*."

53-71. At the request of the husband, Kuntī invoked Dharma, the best of the Devas; and after being impregnated by him, gave birth to Yudhiṣṭhira. Then she got through Pāvaṇa Deva, the son Vṛkodara; and through Indra the Lord of the Devas, Arjuna. Thus, in every year, Kuntī gave birth to one son; and so in three years she gave birth to three very powerful and mighty sons. At this Mādrī spoke to her husband: 'O king, the best of the Kurus! What shall I do now? Kindly suggest to me the means of procreating sons; O Lord, remove my pain.' Pāṇḍu asked Kuntī for this; Kuntī, moved with pity, gave her the *mantra*, so that she might get one son. Then the beautiful Mādrī invoked the twin Aśvinis under the advice of her husband, and got a pair of twins Nakula and Sahadeva through them.

O Munis! Thus five Pāṇḍavas were born successively in every following year to the wives of Pāṇḍu by the seed of the Devas.

Once on a time Pāṇḍu, whose end was drawing nigh, became very passionate at the sight of Mādrī in that solitary hermitage. He, though forbidden repeatedly by Mādrī, warmly embraced her, as if dictated by the great destroyer, and fell to the ground. As the creeper falls down when the tree is felled, so Mādrī dropped on the ground and began to cry violently. Having heard the wailings of Mādrī, Kuntī and the five sons of Pāṇḍu came there weeping and crying; a tumult then ensued and the great Munis also appeared on the scene. Then those Munis, practising great vows, knew that Pāṇḍu was dead and duly performed the ceremony of burning the dead on the banks of the Ganges. At that time Mādrī gave over to Kuntī the

charge of her two sons and followed the Satī practice along with her husband to go to Satyaloka.

The Munis, then, performed Tarpana ceremonies in honor of Pāṇḍu and Mādrī and took Kuntī and the five sons to Hastināpur. Knowing that Kuntī has come, Bhīṣma, Vidura and the relatives of Dhṛtarāṣṭra within the city, all came to Kuntī. They all asked Kuntī, 'O beautiful one! Whose are these five sons?' Kuntī, then, remembered the curse on Pāṇḍu and sorrowfully expressed, 'These are the Deva's sons born in Kuru family.' In order to convince the people assembled there, Kuntī invoked the Devas, who came in the celestial space above and said—'Yes, these are the sons born of our seeds.' Bhīṣma, then, paid respect to the words of the Devas and honored duly the boys. Bhīṣma then took the five sons and Pāṇḍu's wife to Hastinā and gladly nourished them. O Munis! The sons of Prithā were thus born and nourished by Bhīṣma."

Thus ends the sixth chapter of the second Adhyāya on the birth of the Pāṇḍavas in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam.

Chapter VII—showing the departed ones

Sūta said: "The chaste Draupadī was the common wife of all the five very beautiful sons of Kuntī; and she bore five sons, one to every husband. Arjuna had one wife more; she was Subhadrā, the sister of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By the order of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna stole her away (took her by force). The great hero Abhimanyu was born of Subhadrā. This Abhimanyu and the five sons of Draupadī were killed in battle. Abhimanyu's wife Uttarā was the charming daughter of the king Virāt. She gave birth to one dead child, after all the boys, the descendants of the family were extinct. The above child died out of the arrows of Aśvatthāmā. The extraordinarily powerful Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself made alive again this his sister's dead grandson. As this son was born after the family had become extinct, he became known in the world by the name of Parīkṣit. When the sons were all destroyed, Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very sorry, and, tormented by the arrow-like words of Bhīma,

remained in the kingdom of the Pāṇḍavas. Gāndhārī, too, exceedingly distressed on the bereavement of the sons, remained there also.

Yudhiṣṭhira, day and night, served Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri. The greatly religious Vidura always used to console, by the advice of Yudhiṣṭhira, his brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who possessed the eye of wisdom and he remained by his brother's side. Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira used to serve his uncle Dhṛtarāṣṭra in such a way as he might forget the pain of the death of his sons. But Bhīma used to pierce his heart by his arrow-like words that he pronounced so loud as to reach the ears of the old king Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Bhīma used to say: 'In the battlefield I killed all the sons of the wicked blind king (Dhṛtarāṣṭra) and it was I that sucked well and drunk, full to the brim, the blood of the heart of Duhśāsana. Now this blind king eats shamelessly like a crow and a dog, the mass of food (*piṇḍa*) given by me, and thus is bearing uselessly the burden of life.' Daily Bhīma used to tell, thus, harsh words to him; whereas the religious Yudhiṣṭhira used to console him, saying 'Bhīma is a quite illiterate brute' and so forth.

The king Dhṛtarāṣṭra remained there with a grieved heart for eighteen years; the one day he proposed to the Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira about his intention to dwell in forest thus: "Today I wish to perform *tarpanas* in the names of my sons. True it is, that Bhīma performed the funeral obsequies of them all; but, having in view of the former enmity, he did not do anything for my sons. If you give me some money, I will, then, perform the funeral obsequies of my sons and then retire to the forest to perform *tapasyā* that I can go to Heaven."

Vidura also asked Yudhiṣṭhira privately pay to Dhṛtarāṣṭra the sum that he wanted; Yudhiṣṭhira also intended to pay the required money. Then Yudhiṣṭhira, the lord of the world called his younger brothers and addressed them as follows: 'O highly fortunate ones! Our revered uncle is desirous to perform the funeral obsequies of his sons; so we will have to give him some money for the purpose.'

Hearing these words of his elder brother of indomitable valor, Pavana's son, the mighty armed Bhīma became very angry and spoke out follows: 'O highly lucky one! Is it that we will have to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of Duryodhana and others? What a greater stupidity can there be than the fact that such a malevolent blind king is deriving such great happiness at your hands? O *ārya!* It is by your bad counsel that we suffered endless troubles in the forest, and the extremely good Draupadī was brought before the public in the hall by Duhśāsana. O one of good vows! It is for your satisfaction alone that we, though we were very mighty, had to remain in the house of Matsya Rāj Virāt as servants. Had you not been our elder brother and not been addicted to the gambling, would it have been possible I, who killed Jarāsandha, would have been a cook to Virāt Rāj? Never we had been put to so great a trouble! Never would the mighty-armed Arjuna, the Vāsava's son, have acted the part of an actress (a dancer), dressing himself in a female garb, under the name Vrihannalā. Alas! What more painful could there be by assuming a human birth that the hands of Arjuna, that wielded always the Gāndīva bow, would have worn bracelets befitting a woman? I would have been happy then had I, seeing the braid of hair on Arjuna's head and the collyrium in his eyes, cut off the head of Dhṛtarāṣṭra! O Lord of the earth! Without asking you, I set fire on the house of lac named Jatugriha and therefore the vicious Virochana, who wanted to burn us, was himself burnt up. Again, O Lord of men! similarly, without asking you, I slew Kichaka; this is now the one thing I regret that I could not have killed in the same way the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra before the public hall. O king of kings! It was simply your stupidity that you liberated Duryodhana and other sons, the great enemies of the Gandharvas, when they had been imprisoned by them. Again today you are willing to give wealth for the spiritual benefit of those Duryodhana and others! But, O Lord of the earth, I would never give wealth, even if you request me specially to do this.'

Thus saying, Bhīma went away. Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira then consulted with the other three brothers and gave abundance of wealth to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. With this sum, the Ambikā's son Dhṛtarāṣṭra duly performed the *śrāddha*

ceremony of his sons, and gave away lots of things to the Brahmāṇas. The king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, thus performing all the funeral obsequies, became ready to go early to the forest with Gāndhārī, Kuntī and Vidura. By the help of Sañjaya, the highly intelligent Dhṛtarāṣṭra became informed of the roads of the forest, and then went out of the house. Sūrasena's daughter Kuntī, though stopped by her sons, followed them. Bhīma and other Kauravas went along with them, weeping, up to the banks of the Ganges and thence returned to Hastināpura.

The ascetics went to the auspicious Śatayūpa hermitage on the banks of the Ganges, and building a hut practiced *tapasyā* with their hearts concentrated. Thus six years elapsed when Yudhiṣṭhira, troubled by their bereavements, said to his younger brothers: 'I dreamt that our mother Kuntī got very lean and thin. Now my mind wants bitterly to see mother, uncle, aunt, the high-souled Vidura and the highly intelligent Sañjaya. If you approve, I want to go to there.'

Then the five brothers, Pāṇḍu's sons, became desirous to see Kuntī, and taking with them Draupadī, Subhadrā, Uttarā, and other persons went to the Śatayūpa hermitage and saw the persons there; but not seeing Vidura, Yudhiṣṭhira asked: 'Where is Vidura?' Hearing this Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: 'Vidura has taken up Vairāgyam (dispassion) and has gone alone to a solitary place and is meditating in his heart the eternal Brahmā.'

Next day while the king Yudhiṣṭhira was walking along the banks of the Ganges, he saw in the forest Vidura, engaged in his vow and become lean and thin by his *tapasyā;* he then exclaimed: 'I am the king Yudhiṣṭhira; I am saluting you.' The holy Vidura heard and remained motionless like a log of wood. Within an instant a wonderful halo came out of Vidura's face and entered the mouth of Yudhiṣṭhira, both of them being Dharma's parts. Vidura then died; Yudhiṣṭhira expressed great sorrow.

When Vidura's body was going to be set on fire, a celestial voice was heard: 'O king! He was very wise; so he ought not to be burnt; you can go away as you like.' Hearing this, Yudhiṣṭhira bathed in the pure Ganges and

returned to the *āśrama* and informed everything in detail to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. While the Pāṇḍavas were staying in the hermitage with the other inhabitants of the city, Vedavyāsa, Nārada, and other high-souled Munis came there to Yudhiṣṭhira.

Kuntī then spoke to the auspicious Vyāsa: 'O Kṛṣṇa! I saw my son Karṇa, only just when he was born; my mind is being very much tormented for him; so, O great ascetic! Show him once to me. O highly-fortunate One! You alone can do this; so O Lord! Satisfy my heart's desire.'

Gāndhārī said: 'O Muni! I did not see while Duryodhan went to battle; so, O Muni! Show me Duryodhana with his younger brothers.'

Subhadrā said: 'O Omniscient one! I want very much to see the great hero Abhimanyu, dearer to me than my life even; O great ascetic! Show him once to me.' (33-57.)

Sūta said: "Satyavatī's son Vyāsadeva, hearing their words, held Prāṇāyama (deep breathing exercise) and meditated on the eternal Devī, the force of Brahman. When evening time came, the Muni invited Yudhiṣṭhira and all others to the banks of the Ganges. He then bathed in the Ganges and began to chant hymns in praise of the Devī Brahmāmayī Prakṛti, resting on the Puruṣa, the Dweller in the Maṇidvīpa, with attributes, at the same time transcending them, thus: 'O Devī! When Brahmā was not, Viṣṇu was not, Maheśvara was not, nor when lndra, Varuṇa, Kuvera, Yama, and Agnī existed, Thou alone existed then; my salutation to Thee. When there existed not water, Vāyu, ether, earth and their *guṇas*; taste, smell, etc., when there were no senses, mind, *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra;* when there existed no Sun, Moon nor anything, Thou alone existed then; so, O Devī! I bow down again and again to Thee. O Mother! Thou holdest all these visible *jīva-lokas* in the cosmic Hiraṅyagarbha; again Thou bringest this Hiraṅyagarbha, the sum-total of *liṅga-sarīras* (subtle bodies), with the *guṇas—sattva, rājas and tamas*—to a state of equilibrium named *sāmyāvasthā* and remainest quite independent and apart for a *kalpa* period. At that time even those that are possessed of the power of great

discrimination and dispassion cannot fathom Thy nature. O Mother! These persons are praying to me to see their dead ones; but I am quite incapable to do that. So kindly show them their departed ones early.'

While Vyāsa praised thus the Devī, the Devī Mahā-māyā, the Lady of the Universe, of the nature of Universal Consciousness called all the departed ones from the Heavens and showed them to their relatives. Then Kuntī, Gāndhārī, Subhadrā, Uttarā and the Pāṇḍavas became very glad to see their relatives come to them again.Vyāsa, of indomitable valor, again remembering Mahā-māyā, bade goodbye to the departed ones; it seemed then, a great magic had occurred. The Pāṇḍavas and the Munis bade goodbye to each other and went to their respective places. The king Yudhiṣṭhira talked on the way about Vyāsa and ultimately came to Hastinā." (58-68)

Thus ends the seventh chapter of the Second Skandha on showing the departed ones in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter VIII—the extinction Yadu dynasty

1-23. Sūta said: "On the third day after the Pāṇḍavas had returned to Hastināpur, the king Dhṛtarāṣṭra was burnt up together with Gāndhari and Kuntī by the conflagration of fire in the forest. Sañjaya went away at that time on a tour on pilgrimage, leaving Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the forest. The king Yudhiṣṭhira heard all this from Nārada and was very sorry.

Now thirty-six years after the Kuru family had become extinct, all the descendants of Yadu in the Prabhās *tīrtha* were destroyed by the Brahmāṇa's curse. The high-souled descendants of Yadu, intoxicated by drinking wine, fought against each other and were extirpated in the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarām. Balarām then quit his mortal coil; the lotus-eyed Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa quit his life, struck by the arrows of a hunter, to pay respect to a Brahmāṇa's curse. Vasudeva heard of Hari's quitting his mortal

coil, meditated the Goddess of the Universe within his heart and left his holy life.

Arjuna became very sorry; he went to Prabhāsa and performed the funeral obsequies of all duly. Seeing the dead body of Hari, Arjuna collected fuel and burnt his body together with his eight principal wives; he burnt also Balarām's body with that of his wife Revatī. Arjuna, then, went to the Dvārakā city and removed all the inhabitants of the city when the whole Dvārakā city of Vāsudeva was drowned in the waters of the ocean. While Arjuna was taking all the persons with him after getting out of Dvārakā, he felt himself very weak on the way; and therefore a band of robbers, known by the name of *ābhīras* plundered all the wealth and all the wives of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna, of indomitable valor, after his arrival at Indraprastha made Vajra, Aniruddha's son, the king of the place.

Then the highly powerful Arjuna informed Vyāsa of his powerlessness. Vyāsa said: 'O highly intelligent one! When Hari and you will reincarnate in another *yuga*, then your heroic strength will again be Manifested.' Hearing all these words, Prithā's son Arjuna returned to Hastinā with a sorrowful heart, and informed everything to Yudhiṣṭhira, the Dharmarāja.

Hearing the extinction of the Yādavas and Hari's quitting His mortal coil, Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to go to the Himālayas. He installed Parīkṣit, Uttarā's son who was then thirty-six years old, on the throne and went out of his palace in company of his brothers and Draupadī to the forests of the Himālayas. Thus the Pāṇḍavas, Prītha's sons, reigned for thirty-six years in Hastinā and quit their mortal coils in the Himālayas.

Here the greatly religious sage-king Parīkṣit governed with vigilance all his subjects for sixty years. After this, Parīkṣit went once on an hunting expedition to a dense forest and shot a deer. He then searched for the deer and it became noon and he felt very thirsty, hungry, quite fatigued with his body, perspiring, when he saw a Muni merged in meditation; he asked the Muni 'Where can water be had?' But the Muni held at that time the vow of silence; so he did not answer anything. Seeing this, the thirsty king,

influenced by Kali, became angry, raised a dead serpent by the fore-end of his bow and coiled it round the Muni's neck. Even thus coiled with a snake round his neck the Muni remained as before motionless in his state of enlightenment and spoke nothing. The king also returned home.

24-49. Then the Muni's son, born from the cow's womb, Śṛṇgī, a great ascetic, a fiery devotee of Mahāśakti, heard of the above event while he was playing in the forest. His friends spoke to him: 'O Muni! Somebody has now enclosed a dead serpent around the neck of your father.' Hearing their words, Śṛṇgī became very angry and taking water in his hands, cursed thus: 'He who has today coiled a dead serpent around my father's neck, let that villain be bitten by the serpent Takṣak within one week from this day.'

One disciple of the Muni then went to the king in his house and informed him of the Muni's curse. Abhimanyu's son Parīkṣit heard of the curse pronounced by a Brahmāṇa, and knowing infallible, spoke to the aged councillors: 'O Ministers! Certainly it is through my fault that I have been cursed by a Brahmāṇa's son. Now find out and settle what is to be done. Though the persons versed in the *Vedas* say that death is inevitable under these circumstances; yet the wise ones should try their best to thwart this according to the *śāstras*. Many sages who are the advocates of taking steps to redress any act, say that all the actions of wise persons are fructified by proper means; their solution does not remain unsolved. Therefore I am saying that the powers of *Maṇis, mantrams* and herbs (*osadhis*) are indescribable; if applied duly, do you think that they will bear no fruit in this case? I heard that when a Muni's wife died out of snake-bite, the Muni gave away the half of his life to his wife Apsarā and made her alive again. It is not proper for the learned to depend on the maxim that what is inevitable must come to pass; one must try one's best to act for the living present. O Ministers! Have you seen any person in the Heavens or in the world who remains idle, depending on fate alone? The *sannyāsins* have renounced the world; but they must have to go to the houses of the householders, whether they be invited or not invited. See again. supposing that the food of a person is brought to him unasked and suppose it is

thrown into the mouth by some one, can you conceive that food would go down into the belly, from the mouth without one's effort? Therefore one should exert one's own prowess from the very outset; though the intelligent ones should be satisfied with the thought "What can be done? It is not ordained in my fate."' When Parīkṣit said thus, the ministers asked: 'Which Muni made his dead wife alive again, by giving her half his own life? And how did his wife die? Kindly describe all these in detail to us.'

The king said: 'Bhṛgu Muni had a very beautiful wife Pulomā. In her womb the world renowned Chyāvana Muni was born. Sukanyā, the daughter of Śaryāti was the wife of Chyāvana. In her womb was born a beautiful son named Pramati; he was very famous. Pramati had his famous beautiful wife Pratāpī. In her womb was born the great ascetic son Ruru. At this time a person named Sthūlakeśa, a religious truthful man of great name, was practising *tapasyā*. O Ministers! In the meanwhile, the chief Apsarā Menakā held sexual intercourse with Visvāvasu Gandharva on the banks of a river and became pregnant. She went out from that place to the hermitage of Sthūlakeśa on the river bank and gave birth to a very beautiful daughter. Seeing this girl quite an orphan and very beautiful, the Muni Sthūlakeśa began to rear up her and named her Pramadvarā. This all-auspicious girl Pramadvarā attained youth in due course when the Muni Ruru saw her and became smitten with passion.'"

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the Second Skandha on the extinction of the family of Yadu and on the anecdote of Parīkṣit in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgāvatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter IX—the account of Ruru

1-17. Parīkṣit said: 'When the Muni Ruru went to his room to sleep, his mind having become perturbed with passion, his father Pramati seeing him sorrowful, asked him: "O Ruru! Why do you look so absentminded?" Ruru was passionate then; so he said to his father: "I saw a girl named

Pramadvarā in the hermitage of Sthūlakeśa; I wish that she might become my wife."

Hearing this, Pramati went immediately to the hermitage of Sthūlakeśa, and pleased him by various conversations and asked for her beautiful daughter; Sthūlakeśa promised that he would give her daughter in marriage on an auspicious day. Then both the high-souled persons Pramati and Sthūlakeśa began to work in co-operation and make arrangements for marriage ceremony and collected various articles in that hermitage when the fair-eyed girl Pramadvarā, while playing in the courtyard in the house, trod on a serpent, was bitten by it and consequently died. Seeing then Pramadvarā dead, all the Munis of the place assembled, cried and wept with sorrowful hearts, when a great tumultuous uproar ensued. Though the life departed from Pramadvarā's body, yet seeing the brilliant luster of her lifeless body lying on the ground, her nourisher and father Sthūlakeśa became very sorry and wept aloud. Hearing this cry of his, Ruru came there to see what had happened and perceived the girl, though lifeless, yet seeming alive and lying on the ground.

Seeing Sthūlakeśa and other Ṛṣis weeping, Ruru went out from that place and with a grievous heart, began to cry aloud. "Alas! Fate has certainly sent this serpent as the cause of all my miseries and to mar all my happiness. Alas! What am I to do now? Where to go? When my beloved has fallen unto the jaws of death, I do not want to live any longer, bereft of my wife. Oh! What an unfortunate creature I am? I have not been able to embrace this beautiful darling of mine. I am deprived of kissing her face and marrying her. Alas! Fie to my human birth! Let my life get out just now inasmuch as I could not, out of mere shame, throw myself on the burning pyre along with my beloved! Oh! When death comes not to the sorrowful person, even when prayed for, how then can I expect divine happiness in this world? So let me now drop myself down in a lake or enter in to a burning fire or drink venom or strangle myself by tying rope round my neck!"

18-31. Thus Ruru wailed much on the bank of the river and long reflecting in his mind found out a way and thought what would be the advantage in death? "Rather an irretrievable sin would be incurred in committing suicide; and my father and mother would be sorry. Seeing me commit suicide, my bad luck and enemies will be gladdened; there is no manner of doubt in this. What benefit will my beloved gain if I commit suicide or if I be distressed for her bereavement. Suppose I die, even then my beloved will not become mine in the next world; so there are many faults in my committing suicide but there is no fault if I preserve my life."

Thus coming to a conclusion Ruru bathed, performed *ācamana* and became pure. He then took water in his hand said: "Whatever good works, worshipping the gods, etc., that I have done and if I have performed, with devotion, the service to my preceptors and teachers and superiors, *homa* ceremonies, *japam, tapasyā*, if I have studied all the *Vedas* and if I have recited Gāyatrī and worshipped the Sun then let my beloved have life and get up as an outcome of my *puṇya*. If my beloved does not get back her life, I will certainly quit my life." Thus saying, he worshipped the Devas mentally and threw that water of his hands on the ground. Thus Ruru, with a sorrowful heart, was weeping.

The Devas' messenger came down and said: "O Brahmāṇa! Don't make this bold attempt; how can your beloved get back her life? The life-period of this beautiful girl, born of Gandharva's sperm and Apsarā's ovum is now exhausted; now look for another beautiful woman. O one of very dull understanding! Why are you crying in vain? Where is the affection between you and this girl; she died in an unmarried state (without marrying you)."

At this Ruru said: "O Deva messenger! I won't marry any other lady, whether my beloved gets back her life or does not get back her life; in case she does not regain this life, I will also forego my life at this instant." At this greatest importunity of Ruru, the Deva messenger became glad and spoke the following truthful beneficent yet beautiful words:

32-51. “O Brahmāṇa! I will suggest one way to you; kindly hear. The Devas ordained this long, long ago. You can give up your half life period, and with that you can make this girl alive soon.”

Ruru said: “O Deva messenger! I give half my life-period to this girl; there is no doubt about this. Let my beloved get back her life soon and get up.”

The king said: ’O Ministers! At this time Visvāvasu, knowing that his daughter Pramadvarā is dead, descended from the Heavens in a celestial car and came to the place; then the Gandharva king and the Deva messenger both went to Yama, the Dharmarāj, and spoke thus: “O Dharmarāj! This Visvāvasu’s daughter Pramadvarā, the wife of Ruru, the Ṛṣi’s son was bitten by a snake and has now come to your place. The Dvija Ruru is now desirous to quit his life; so, O Sun’s son! Now let the girl again get her life through the influence of Ruru’s *brahmacarya* (purity) as a consequence of his giving away half his life period for the girl.”

Dharma said: “O Deva messenger! if you want to make the girl alive again, let her get life as a consequence of half the life-period of Ruru being subtracted. Go immediately and give the girl to Ruru.”

The king said: ’O Ministers! Yama having said thus to the Deva messenger, he went away immediately and made Pramadvarā alive and handed her over to Ruru. Thus, on an auspicious day, Ruru married her. Thus the Ṛṣi’s daughter Pramadvarā though fallen dead, got again her life by proper means. So, O Councillors! to save life, one should resort one’s best duty according to the *śāstras*, by the use of gems, *mantras*, herbs and plants.’

Thus speaking to the ministers, the king Parīkṣit had a fine building of seven floors in height erected, placed the principal guards around it and stationed also the most powerful men well versed in the knowledge of *Maṇi* (gems), *mantrams* and plants for protection, and immediately ascended to this building. To appease the wrath of the Muni Śṛṇgī, the king sent the Muni named Gaurmukha to him and requested him repeatedly ’Let the crime of the humble devotee be forgiven.’

Then, for self preservation, the king brought from all sides the Brahmāṇas who are perfect in their knowledge and application of the *mantras*. The minister's son placed the elephants in proper places so that nobody can ascend to the top of the building; what more can be said than the fact that even air could not find entrance there when once ordered 'no admission'—what to speak of others! The king Parīkṣit remained there and counted the number of days of the serpent Takṣaka's coming there; he performed his bath, *sandhyā-vandanams* and eating; even he consulted with his ministers and governed his kingdom from there.

O Ṛṣis! At this time a Brahmāṇa named Kaśyapa, versed in the *mantras*, heard of the curse of the king and thought that he would get abundant wealth if he could free the king from Takṣaka's poison and proposed to himself that he would go to the place where the cursed king Parīkṣit was staying with the Brahmāṇas. Pondering thus, the Brahmāṇa went out of his house, on the expectation of wealth from the king.

Thus ends the ninth chapter of the second Skandha on the account of Ruru in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter X—the death of king Parīkṣit

1-3. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! On that very day when the Brahmāṇa Kaśyapa went out of his house, Takṣak, knowing the king Parīkṣit cursed, assumed an aged Brahmāṇa's form and went out of his abode.

The serpent Takṣak met the Brahmāṇa Kaśyapa on the way. Seeing the Brahmāṇa, versed in the *mantras*, Takṣak asked him 'Where are you going so in haste, and what for are you taking this trouble?'

4-17. Thus questioned, Kaśyapa replied: 'I heard that the serpent Takṣak will bite the king Parīkṣit; therefore I am going in haste to the king Parīkṣit to cure him of the serpent's poison. I know the *mantra* (mystic verse) that

can destroy the effect of poison. If his life-period is not exhausted, I will certainly give him back his life.’

Takṣak then. Said: ’O Brahmāṇa! I am that Takṣak; I will bite him and take away his life. So you better desist. Will you be able to treat him whom I bite; certainly you will not.’

Kaśyapa said: ’O chief of snakes! When you will bite the king who has been cursed by the Brahmāṇa, I will no doubt make him alive by the power of my mantra.’

Takṣak said: ’O chief of Brahmāṇas! If you have so thought that you will make the king alive after I bite him, then show me your strength beforehand. O sinless one! I will bite this Nyagrodha tree (the Indian fig-tree) just now; make it alive.’

Kaśyapa said: ’Certainly I will make this tree alive, that will be burnt away by the venom of your teeth.’

Sūta said: “The snake Takṣak then bit the tree, which was reduced to ashes; and asked Kaśyapa to bring back that tree to life. Seeing the tree reduced to ashes by the fire of venom of the snake, he collected all the ashes and said: ’O highly venomous serpent. See today the power of my *mantra*. Behold! While you are witnessing, I will enliven this tree. Thus the great *mantra*-knower Kaśyapa took water in his hand, and impregnating it with his *mantra* power, sprinkled the water on the ashes. Immediately, on the sprinkling of the *mantra*-saturated water, the Nyagrodha tree got back its life as before.

Takṣak became greatly astonished to see the tree enlivened again and said to Kaśyapa: ’O chief of Brahmāṇas! What is your object in taking so much pains? Speak out what you want and I will fulfil your desires.’

Kaśyapa said: ’O chief of serpents! Knowing the king cursed, I am going to do good to him by my knowledge and to get in return abundant wealth.’

Hearing this, Takṣak said: 'I will give you the amount of wealth that you desire; take that and go back to your house, and let my desire be also fulfilled.'

18-26. Kaśyapa, the knower of the highest state, heard Takṣaka's words and pondered in his mind again and again: 'What is to be done now? If I take this wealth and go back to my house, my name and fame will not be known in this world, simply for my greed; but if the king be made alive again, my undying fame, abundant wealth, and greater *puṇya* will accrue to me. Again, fie to that wealth with which there is no fame; so one must try one's best to preserve one's fame. The king Raghu, in ancient days, gave away everything of his to the Brahmāṇas for fame; the king Harischandra and Karṇa did not hesitate a bit to give away endless property. There is one point again to take into account, how can I trifle away the matter, seeing the king burnt up by the venomous fire? If I can bring back the king's life, everyone will become happy. If the kingdom be without its king, the subjects will, no doubt, be ruined. So, following the king's death, sin will also incur on me due to the ruin of the subjects; and infamy will come on my head that I am a very greedy man.' Thus meditating in his mind, the highly intelligent Kaśyapa began to meditate, and plunged himself in *dhyāna;* he thereby came to know that the king's life period was spent up. Thus knowing the king's death imminent, the virtuous Kaśyapa took the desired wealth from Takṣak and returned home.

27-48. Thus making Kaśyapa to retire to his house on the seventh day, Takṣak went on to Hastināpur to bring death and destruction to Parīkṣit. When he went close to the city, he heard that the king Parīkṣit was staying on the upper story of the palace; and the palace had been preserved by various gems, *mantras*, herbs and plant. Takṣak became very anxious; and fearing, lest the curse of the Brahmāṇas will fall on his head, became very much agitated and thought. 'How shall I now enter the palace? How can I cheat this stupid hypocrite vicious king, cursed by the Brahmāṇa, who causes troubles to the Brahmāṇas. Not a single man has taken birth in the Paṇḍava family ever since that he coiled a dead serpent round the neck of

an ascetic Brahmāṇa. The king has committed a very heinous crime, and knowing the course of time to be in fallible, has placed sentries on all sides of the palace and has ascended to the topmost story of the building, thinking thereby to deceive Death, and is staying in a peaceful mind. How can then he be smitten, in accordance with the Brahmāṇa's word? The king, of dull intellect, knows not that death cannot be prevented; for that reason he has placed guards and sentinels round the building, and himself has got up the house and is happily whiling away his time; but he is quite ignorant that when Fate, who can never be violated, ordains the death, how can it be prevented though thousands of attempts are made to thwart it? This scion of Paṇḍu's family knows that his death is at hand, yet wants to live and therefore is staying in his own place with a tranquil mind. The king ought now to make charities and other meritorious works; it is only by acts of Dharma that disease is destroyed and life is prolonged. And if that be not the object then a dying man ought to take bath, to make charities and to await his time of death. He thereby attains heaven; otherwise hell is inevitable. The king committed great sin in the act of causing pains and trouble to the Brahmāṇa or other similar acts, and therefore death is so close that the Brahmāṇa curse has fallen thus on his head. Is there no such Brahmāṇa who can make him understand this? or the Creator has ordained his death now as inevitable.'

Thus meditating, the chief serpent made other serpents following him assume then form of ascetic Brahmāṇas, and gave them roots and fruits to be taken to the king. The serpent Takṣak himself entered within the fruits in the form of an insect. Then the ascetic serpents took the fruits and quickly went out of the place. They came to the palace where Parīkṣit was resting. Seeing them, the guards asked: 'What for have you come here?'

Hearing this the ascetic serpents replied, 'We are coming from the hermitage to prolong the life of the hero king, the son of Abhimanyu and the son of the Pāṇḍava family, by chanting the *mantras* of the *Atharva-veda*, and we want to have an interview with the king; now you better go and inform the king that "Some Munis have come to see you." We will sprinkle

water on him and give him some sweet fruits and then depart. We have never come across such gatekeepers in the family of Bharat as disallow the ascetic Muni visitors to go and see the king. We will ascend to the place where the Parīkṣit is staying and we will bless him, and wish him long life; we will communicate to him our orders and then depart to our own places.'

49-68. Sūtā said: "Hearing these words, the sentinels spoke as previously ordered by the king, as follows: 'O Brahmāṇas! We think verily you won't be able to have an interview with the king today; you, all ascetics can come tomorrow to this palace. O Munis! Owing to the Brahmāṇa's curse, the king has built this place; then it follows, as a matter of course, that the Brahmāṇas are not allowed to get up to the palace.' Then the serpents, in the form of the Brahmāṇas, spoke: 'O good sentinels! Then take these roots and fruits and offer them to the king and communicate to him our blessings.'

The sentinels went to the king, and informed him of the arrival of the ascetic Brahmāṇas. The king replied: 'Bring here the roots and fruits offered by them and ask what for they have come. Give them my *pranāms;* today I cannot meet with them; let them come tomorrow morning.' The sentinels went to the ascetics, got from them their roots and fruits and offered them with great respect to the king. When the serpents in the guise of the hypocrite Brahmāṇas went away, the king took those fruits and spoke to his ministers 'Take these fruits and let all my friends eat them. I will take only this one fruit given by the Brahmāṇas and will eat it.'

Saying this, the Uttarā's son Parīkṣit gave away fruits to the friends and took one ripe fruit for himself, broke it and saw within it a very fine copper-colored black-eyed insect. At this the ministers were astonished; the King spoke to them: 'The sun has set; so there is no further chance of any fear from any poison today. I speak then today, fearing the Brahmāṇa's curse, let this insect bite me.' Thus saying, the king took that insect and placed it on his neck. That Takṣak in the form of an insect, when placed,

during the sunset, on the neck by the king, immediately assumed the form of the terrible Kāla (Death), coiled round the king and beat him. The Ministers were greatly surprised and began to weep and cry with great pain and sorrow. Seeing that terrible serpent, the ministers, overwhelmed with terror, fled away on all sides. The guards cried out loudly. A terrible outcry was raised on all sides. Then Uttarā's son, the king Parīkṣit, coiled by the serpent, saw that all his efforts were rendered fruitless, and remained silent and held fast to his patience. From the mouth of the serpent Takṣak the terrible venomous flames came out burning all and immediately killed the king. Thus taking away the life of the king, Takṣak went up in the celestial atmosphere; the people then saw that the serpent was ready as if to burn the world. The king fell down lifeless like a burnt tree; and all the persons cried out seeing the king dead."

Thus ends the tenth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the death of the king Parīkṣit in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter XI—the Sarpa-Yajña

1-4. Sūta said: "O Munis! seeing now the king lifeless, and his son a mere boy, the ministers themselves performed all his funeral ceremonies. First they burned the king on the banks of the Ganges without uttering any *mantras*, as his death was an accidental one due to snakebite, afterwards they had an effigy of the king made of *kuśa* grass and placed it on a funeral pyre and burned it, with sandal and scented wood. The priest then performed and completed his funeral obsequies, repeating duly the Vedic *mantras*, and distributed various things in charities to the Brahmāṇas, together with sufficient quantity of gold, and varieties of food and clothing so that the king may attain heaven.

5-7. Next, on an auspicious moment, the ministers installed the boy prince on the throne. That gladdened the hearts of the subjects and all the populace of the city, towns, and villages acknowledged the boy prince

Janamejaya, endowed with all royal qualities as their king. The Dhātreyi gave all instructions to the king about his duties. The boy prince gradually grew in years and became endowed with great intellect.

8-15. When Janamejaya became eleven years old, the family priest initiated him duly with the Gāyatrī *mantra* and he also studied it duly. Then Kṛpācārya taught him perfectly the science of archery (*dhanur-veda*) as Dronācārya taught Arjuna and Paraśurāma taught Karṇa. Janamejaya learnt by and by all the sciences and became very powerful and indomitable to his enemies as he was skilled in the science of archery, he was similarly in the other branches of the *Vedas*. Truthful, self-controlled, religious, the king Janamejaya acquired full knowledge in the *dhārma-śāstras* (philosophies and law books) and *artha-śāstras* (economics) and governed his kingdom like the Dharma's son Yudhiṣṭhira.

The king of Kāśī gave his all-auspicious daughter Vapustamā in marriage to the king Janamejaya wearing golden coat of armor. The king Janamejaya, with the beautiful Vapuśamā casting sidelong looks, looked very happy as was the king Vicitravīrya, when he got for his wife the daughter of Kāshirāj and also when Arjuna got his Subhadrā. Then the king began to enjoy his lotus-eyed Vapustamā in forest, and gardens like Śatakratu and Śachī. The able ministers conducted satisfactorily the reins of government; and the well-governed subjects, passed away their time with cheerful hearts.

16-32. In the meanwhile, a Muni named Uttanka, being much troubled by Takṣak, thought who could help him in his taking revenge on Takṣak, and seeing the king Parīkṣit's son the king Janamejaya a proper person, came to Hastinā to the king and spoke out thus: 'O good king! Thou dost not know when to do a thing that ought to be done; Thou art doing at present what ought not to be done; and thou art not doing what should be done now. There is nothing of anger or energy within Thee; Thou dost things as a child does; so Thou dost not know the meaning of the *śāstras* nor dost Thou know Thy former enemy; so what shall I pray before Thee?'

Hearing this Janamejaya said: ’O highly fortunate one! I do not know who is my enemy; what wrong is there to be redressed? please speak out what I am to do.’

Uttanka said: ’O king! the wicked Takṣak killed Thy father; ask about the death of Thy father from Thy councillors.’

Hearing these words, the king Janamejaya asked his ministers; they replied ’Thy father died out of the snake Takṣaka’s bite.’

Then the king spoke: ’The cause of my father’s death is the Brahmāṇa’s curse; what is the fault of Takṣaka in this matter; please say.’

Uttanka said: ’It was Takṣaka that gave abundance of wealth to Kāśyapa who was coming to cure Thy father of Takṣaka’s poison, and made him desist from his purpose; so O king! is not that Takṣak, then, thy father’s great enemy and his slayer? O King! In former days, when Pramadvarā, the dearest wife of the Muni Ruru, died of snakebite in her unmarried state, Ruru made her alive again. But Ruru made then the promise “whichever serpent will see, I will take away its life by striking it with a club.”

O King! Thus making the resolve, he began to kill snakes wherever he found with his club, and thus, in his course of travel all round the earth, he saw within a forest an aged terrible water-snake (Dhonda serpent) and immediately lifted his club to kill it and angrily struck a blow on it, when the snake replied: “O Brahmāṇa! Why are you striking me thus? I have not caused any offence to you.”

Ruru said: “O serpent! My dearest wife died of snakebite; since then I have made this resolve, under great provocation and sorrow, to kill snakes.” Hearing thus, the water-snake Dundubha replied: “I do not bite; those who bite are a different class of snakes; simply on account of my bearing a body similar to them that you will strike me is not quite proper.” Hearing these beautiful humane words from the mouth of a serpent, Ruru asked: “Who are you? Why have you become this Dundubha snake?”

33-45. The snake replied: "O Brahmāṇa! I was formerly a Brahmāṇa; there was a friend of mine named Khyās, very religious, truthful and self-controlled. Once he was staying in his Agṇihotra room and I foolishly terrified him much by placing before him an artificial snake created by me of the leaves of trees. He became so much bewildered with fear and shuddered so terribly that he at length cursed me saying: "O one of blunt intellect! As you have terrified me by this snake, having no poison, so you better be a snake of that type." Immediately I turned into a snake and when I much entreated that Brahmāṇa, his anger abated a little and he said again: "O snake! Pramati's son Ruru will no doubt free you of this curse." I am that snake; and you are also that Ruru; now hear my words in conformity with *dharma*. The highest *dharma* of the Brahmāṇa is non-killing. There is no doubt about this. The wise Brahmāṇas ought to show mercy to all. No harm or killing is to he committed anywhere except in *yajña* (sacrifice); killing is only allowed in a *yajña;* for at the sacrifice, the animal killed attains the highest goal; hence killing in sacrifice is not reckoned as an act of killing."

Uttanka said: 'That Brahmāṇa was then freed of the serpent body; and Ruru, too, desisted from killing since then. O King! Ruru gave life back to that girl and married her but even then, remembering the former enmity he killed the snakes. But, O chief of Bharata's family! Thou art staying without any care, without any anger to the snakes and without any revenge to the previous wrong. O king of kings! Thy father died high up in the air without any bath or charity due to be done at the time of death. So rescue thy father by killing his enemies, the snakes. That son is dead, though living, who does not consider the act of his father's enemy as inimical. Until thou dost kill the snakes, thy father's enemies, thy father's life will not be freedfrom hell. O king! Now remember the wrong done to Thy father and perform the sacrifice to the Great Mother, denominated as the Sarpa-Yajña (the sacrifice of snakes).'

46-55. Sūta said: "Hearing the words of Uttanka, the king Janamejaya sadly wept and shed tears, and thought within himself: 'Alas! Fie to me! I am

greatly stupid; hence I feel myself proud but in vain. Where can his honor be whose father, bitten by a snake, has gone down to hell? Now I will, no doubt, commence the Sarpa-Yajña and ensure the destruction of all the snakes in the blazing sacrificial fire and thus deliver my father from hell.'

Thus coming to a conclusion, he called all his ministers and said: 'O ministers! Better make arrangements duly for a great sacrifice. Have a suitable holy site on the banks of the Ganges selected and measured by the Brahmāṇas, have a beautiful sacrificial hall built up on one hundred pillars and prepare a sacrificial altar within this. O Ministers! When all these preliminaries will be completed, I will commence with great eclat the great Sarpa-Yajña (sacrifice of snakes). In that Yajña, the snake Takṣak will be the animal victim; and Uttanka, the great Muni, will be the sacrificial priest; so invite early the all-knowing Brahmāṇas, versed in the *Vedas*.'

Thus at the command of the king, the able ministers collected all the materials of the sacrifice and prepared a big sacrificial altar. When the oblations were offered on the sacrificial fire, calling on the snakes, Takṣak became greatly distressed with fear and took refuge of Indra saying 'Save my life.' Indra then gave hopes to Takṣaka, trembling with fear, and made him sit on his *āsana*, encouraged him with words 'No fear. O! snake do not fear any more.'

56-65. The Muni Uttanka, seeing that Takṣak had taken Indra's protection and that Indra had given him hopes of 'no fear,' called on Takṣaka with Indra to come to fire with an anxious heart; Takṣak, then, seeing no other way, took refuge of the greatly religious Āṣṭik, the son of the Muni Jarat Kāru, born of the family of Yāyāvara. The Muni's son Āṣṭik came to the sacrificial hall and chanted hymns in praise of Janamejaya; the king, too, seeing the Muni boy greatly learned worshipped him and said: 'What for have you come? I will give you what you desire.' Hearing this, Āṣṭika prayed: 'O highly enlightened one! Let you desist from this sacrifice.'

The truthful king, prayed thus again and again, stopped the Sarpa-Yajña to keep the Muni's word. Vaiśampāyana then recited the whole *Mahābhārata*

to the king to cheer up his heart. But the king, even hearing the whole *Mahābhārata* could not find peace, and asked Vedavyāsa 'How can I get peace; my mind is constantly being burned with sorrow; say what am I to do? I am very miserable; hence my father Parīkṣit the son of Abhimanyu has died an unnatural death. O lucky one! See that a Kṣatriya's death in a deadly battlefield or in an ordinary battle is praiseworthy; even his death in his own house, if followed up according to natural laws and *vidhis* (rules) is commendable; but my father did not die such a death; under the Brahmāṇa's curse why did he, quite senseless, quit his life high up in the air? O son of Satyavatī! Now advise me so that my father who is now in hell can again go up to the heavens, and that my heart may find its way to peace.'

Thus ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Second Skandha on the "Sarpa Yajña" in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter XII—the birth of Āṣṭika

1-4. Sūta said: "Hearing these words of the king, Vyāsadeva, the son Satyavatī addressed to him before the assembly, thus: 'O king! I am now reciting to you a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, holy, wonderful, filled with many anecdotes, and leading to auspicious results; listen. Before I made my son Śuka study this *Purāṇa;* O king! I will now recite before you that highest *Purāṇa*, with all the secrets contained therein. I have extracted this from all the *āgamas;* it brings in *dharma* (religion), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (fructification of desires) and *mokṣa* (liberation); hearing this gives always happiness and good results.'

5-6. At this Janamejaya said: 'O Lord! Whose son is this Muni Āṣṭika? Why did he come as an obstacle in my Sarpa-Yajña (sacrifice of snakes)? And what object had he in preserving the snakes? O highly fortunate one! Kindly describe all this in detail; after this recite the *Purāṇa*, also, in detail to me.'

7-18. Vyāsadeva said: 'O king! In former days there lived a Muni named Jaratkāru. He always remained in the path of peace; and did not marry. Once he saw, in a cave in a forest, his fathers and forefathers pendant. They spoke to Jaratkāru thus: "O son! Marry; we will thereby be greatly pleased; if there be a son of good character born to you, we all will be freed from all troubles and we would then able to go to Heaven." Hearing this Jaratkāru said: "O Forefathers! If I get a girl of my name, without begging and asking and if she be entirely obedient to me, I will marry and lead a householder's life; thus I have spoken truly to you."

Thus saying to his forefathers, Jaratkāru went on tour to the holy places. Now it happened so, that at that very time Kadru, the mother of snakes cursed her sons, saying "May you be burnt by fire." The matters of this incident run as follows:

At that moment Kadru and Vinatā, the two co-wives of Kaśyapa saw the horses yoked in the chariot of the sun and thus argued with each other: Kadru, seeing the sun's horse, first asked Vinatā "O good one! Tell me soon, what is the color of this horse?" Vinatā said: "O auspicious one! What do you think? I said, the color of the horse is white; you also better say before hand what is its color? We will then lay a wager (and challenge)."

Kadru said: "O Smiling one! I think the the horse is black. Now come; let us challenge; whoever will be defeated will become the slave of the other." Thus saying, Kadru told her sons that were obedient: "Cover by your bodies all the pores of the body of the horse of the chariot of the Sun, so it may look black; go and do it." At this some snakes replied "That cannot be." Kadru then cursed them saying: "Let you fall on the sacrificial fire of Janamejaya." Then the other snakes tried to please their mother and coiled round the back of that horse so that the horse began to look black. Kadru and Vinatā, the two co-wives went together and saw the horse. Vinatā saw it black and became very sorry.

19-21. Now, Garuḍa, Vinatā's son, very powerful and devourer of snakes was passing that way and seeing his mother very distressed asked her: "O

Mother! Why do you look so very sorry? It seems as if you are weeping. Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun and I myself are your two sons living. Fie to us that, while we are living, you will have to suffer pains. O beautiful one! If mother suffers while the son is living, then what use is there in having such a son? So, O Mother, give out the cause of your grief and I will remove it at once."

22-31. Hearing this Vinatā said: "O son! What shall I say to you of my misery; I am now become the slave of my rival wife. By some pretext she defeated me and is now telling me to carry her on my back. O son! For this reason I am sorry." Hearing these words of the mother, Garuḍa said: "Very well I will carry her on my shoulders wherever she wishes to go. O auspicious one! You need not be sorry; I will remove all your cares."

Vyāsadeva said: 'Thus spoken to by Garuḍa, Vinatā went to Kadru. At that time the highly powerful Garuḍa went there also to free his mother of her slavery, and carried Kadru with all her sons on his back to the other side of the ocean. When Garuḍa went across the ocean, Garuḍa spoke to Kadru: "O mother! I bow down to thee; kindly say how my mother can be freed of your slavery. Hearing this Kadru said: "O son! If you can bring today by your sheer force nectar from the *deva-loka* and give it to my sons then you will be able to free your helpless mother.

When Kadru said so, the highly powerful Vinatā's son, Garuḍa immediately went to the abode of Indra and, fighting hard, stole away the jar of nectar and brought and gave it to Kadru and freed his mother Vinatā from the slavery of Kadru. In the meantime, the snakes went for their bath, after which they would drink the nectar. Indra stole away that jar which contained nectar. O king! Thus, by the sheer strength of arms of Garuḍa Vinatā was freed of her slavery. On the other hand, when the snakes returned from their bath and found that there was no jar of nectar, they began to lick the Kusa grass over which the jar of nectar was kept, thinking that they would thereby get some drops of nectar which might have trickled over; and the result was that by the sharp edges of kusa grasses,

the tongues of all the snakes were cut asunder into two; hence the snakes are called Dvijihva (forked-tongued).

32-36. The snake Vāsuki and others, whom Kadru, the mother of snakes, cursed, went to Brahmā and took his refuge and informed all of the cause of their terror, the curse from their mother; when Brahmā spoke to them: 'Go and give the sister of Vāsuki, named Jaratkāru, in marriage to the great Muni Jarat Kāru, (both of the same name). In her womb, a son named Āṣṭika will be born; and he will certainly deliver you from your difficulties.' Hearing those beneficial words of Brahmā, Vāsuki went to the forest and requested humbly the great Muni Jarat Kāru to accept in marriage her own sister when the Muni, knowing the girl to be of his name, spoke out thus: "But when your sister will act against my wishes, I will forsake her at once."

37-46. Under these conditions, the Muni married her. And Vāsuki, after giving her sister in marriage according to her own wishes to the Muni, returned to her own abode. O Tormentor of foes! Then the Muni Jaratkāru built a white hut of leaves in that great forest and began to pass his days happily in enjoyment with his wife. Once, on an occasion, after he had taken his dinner he slept, and told his wife not to awaken him under any circumstances and fell fast asleep. The beautiful sister of Vāsuki sat by his side. When the evening time came and the sun began to set, the Vāsuki's sister Jaratkāru became afraid at the thought that the evening Sandhya might not be performed by the Muni and thought thus: "What am I to do now? My heart finds not rest if I do not awaken him; and if I awaken him, he will forsake me at once. Now if I do not awaken him, the evening will pass away to no purpose. Whatever it be, if he quits me or if my death ensues, that is better than the non-observance of *dharma;* for when *dharma* is destroyed, hell ensues.

Thus thinking, the girl awakened him saying: "O One of good vows! It is evening time; so get up; etc." The Muni got up in great anger and addressed his wife: "When you have disturbed my sleep, I now go away

from you; you also better go to your brother's house." When the Muni said so, Vāsuki's sister spoke out, trembling: "O One of indomitable luster! How will the object be served for which my brother has given me in marriage with you."

47-50. The Muni then spoke firmly to his wife Jaratkāru: "That is within your womb." Jaratkāru then, forsaken by the Muni, went to the abode of Vāsuki. When her brother Vāsuki asked her about her son, she said: "The Muni has forsaken me, saying that 'the son is within your womb'." At this Vāsuki trusted; and said: "The Muni won't ever tell lies" and gave shelter to his sister. O Kurusattama! After some time, a famous boy named the Muni Āṣṭika was born.

51-56. O king! That Muni boy, the knower of truth, had desisted you from your sacrifice of snakes for the preservation of his mother's family. It is well and good, befitting you, that you respected the words of the Muni Āṣṭika, born of Yāyāvara family and the cousin of Vāsuki. O Mighty-armed! Let all auspiciousness come to you; you have heard the whole *Mahābhārata* and gave away lots of things in charities. You have worshipped innumerable Munis. But, O king! Though you have done so many good things, yet your father has not attained heaven and you have not been able to sanctify your family. So, O king Janamejaya! Now install a capacious temple of the Devī with the highest devotion; then all your desires will be fulfilled. The all-auspicious Devī, the Giver of all desires, makes the kingdoms more stable and increases the family, if She be always worshipped with the highest devotion.

57-64. O king! You better perform duly the Devīmakha Yajña Yotistoma and others, pleasing to the Devī, and hear the great *Purāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*, filled with accounts of the glorious deeds of the Devī. I will make you hear now that Divine *Purāṇa*, filled with various sentiments, highly sanctifying and capable to carry one across this ocean of world. O king! There is no other subject in this world worthy to be heard than the above *Purāṇa* and there is no other thing to be worshipped than the lotus

feet of the Devī. O king! Those are certainly fortunate, those are intelligent and blessed, in whose hearts of love and devotion reign always the Devī Bhagavatī. O illustrious scion of Bharata's family! Know them to the always afflicted with troubles who do not worship in this world the great Mother Mahā-māyā. O king! Who is there that will not worship Her when Brahmā and all the Devas are always engaged in Her devotional service? O king! He who hears always this *Purāṇa* gets all his desires fulfilled; in former days Bhagavatī Herself spoke this excellent *Purāṇa* to Viṣṇu. O king! Your heart will be appeased and become peaceful when you hear this; and, as a result of your hearing this *Purāṇam*, all your ancestors will attain endless Heavenly life.'

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Second Skandha on the birth of Āṣṭika in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa. Here ends as well the Second Skandha.

Third Skandha

Chapter I—questions by Janamejaya

1-10. Janamejaya said: "O Bhagavān! What is that great *yajña* (sacrifice) named Ambā Yajña about which you referred just now? Who is the Ambā? Where was She born? From whom and what for did Her birth take place? What are Her qualities? What is Her form and nature? O Ocean of mercy! you are all-knowing; kindly describe everything duly. Along with this, describe in detail the origin of the *brahmāṇḍa*. O Brahmāṇa! You know everything about this whole Universe.

I heard that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra are the three Devatās, who are successively originated to create, preserve, and destroy this Universe. Are these three high-souled entities independent? or do they do their respective duties being subservient to another Person? Now I am very eager to know all these. So Pārāśara's son! Describe all these to me.

Are these highly powerful Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara subject to death like ordinary beings? Or are they of the nature of everlasting Existence, Intelligence and Bliss? Are they subject to the threefold pains arising from their own selves (*ādhyātmika*), from elements (*ādhibhautika*) and from those arising from gods (*ādhidaivika*)? Are they subject to Time? How and wherefrom were they originated? Do they feel the influence of pleasure, pain, sleep or laziness?

O Muni! Do their bodies consist of seven *dhātus?* (blood, etc.) or are they of some other kinds? A great doubt has arisen in me on all these points. If these bodies be not made up of five elements, then of what substance are they built of? And of what *guṇas* are their senses built also? How do they enjoy objects of enjoyments? How long is their longevity? O Brahmāṇa! where do they, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, the best of the gods live?

And of what nature are their powers and prosperities? I like very much to hear all these. So describe all these in detail to me.

11-24. O sage! as regards this wide *saṁsāra*, I have expressed my doubt; now answer me what is the Real and True, and thus remove my doubts. Many believe Mahādeva, the Lord of all the other Devas as the Supreme God, is the Cause of all. He is the source of deliverance to all the *jīvas;* devoid of birth and death; always auspicious; peaceful in Himself and the controller of the three *guṇas*. He is the one and only cause of creation, preservation and destruction.

Some Paṇḍitas believe Viṣṇu as the God of all, and praise Him as such. They claim that Viṣṇu is the powerful Supreme Self, the Lord of all and the First Person, *ādipuruṣa*. It is He that has no birth nor death, the Deliverer of all *jīvas*, Omnipresent; His faces are everywhere; He is the Granter of enjoyments and liberation to the devotees.

Some others call again Brahmā, the Cause of all. It is He that is omniscient and the Stimulator of all beings. The four-faced Brahmā, the best of all the Devas is born from the navel lotus of someone of endless force. He resides in Satyaloka; He is the Creator of all and the Lord of all the Devas.

Again some other Paṇḍitas call the Sun, Sūrya as God. In the morning and in the evening they chant His hymns, without any lack of slackness and laziness. Again there are some others who say that Indra is the lord of all the *jīvas;* he is thousand-eyed; it is Indra, the husband of Śachī, that is the God of all. Those who perform *yajñas* (sacrifices) worship Vāsava, the king of the Devas. He drinks Soma juice Himself, and those who drink Soma are his beloved. He is the one and only Lord of Sacrifices.

Thus all men worship, according to their respective wishes, Varuṇa, Soma, Agṇi, Pavana (wind), Yama (the god of Death), Kuvera, the lord of wealth; there are some again who worship the elephant-faced Gaṇapati, the Fructifier of all actions, the Granter of desires of all the devotees, and the Giver of success to all in all enterprises, no sooner He is remembered. Some

ācāryas (professors) say again that the All-auspicious Ādi-Māyā, the Great Śakti Bhavānī, the Giver of everything, Who is the nature of existence with and without attributes, Who is not different from Brahman, who is both Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the Creatrix, the Preservatrix and the Destructrix of all, the Mother of all the gods, beings and *lokas*, is the Great Goddess of this *brahmāṇḍa*. She is without beginning and end, full, present in all the beings and everywhere. It is this Bhavānī that assumes the various endless forms such as Vaiṣṇavī, Śānkarī, Brāhmī, Vāsavī, Vārunī, Vārāhī, Narasimhī, Mahā-Lakṣmī, the one and secondless Vedamātā, and others. It is this *vidyā*-nature that is the one and only root of this tree of *saṁsāra* (universe).

The mere act of remembering Her destroys heaps of afflictions of the devotees, and fulfills all their desires. She gives *mokṣa* to those who are desirous of liberation, and gives rewards to those who want such. She is beyond the three *guṇas,* and yet She emanates them. Therefore the *yogīs* that want rewards meditate Her, Who is of the nature of *vidyā* and Who is devoid of attributes. The best Munis, the knowers of the truths of *Vedānta* meditate on Her as formless, immutable, stainless, omnipresent Brahman devoid of all *dharma*. She is described in some *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* as full of potency (*tejas*).

Some intelligent persons describe God as of infinite hands, infinite ears, infinite legs, infinite faces, the peaceful Virāt-Puruṣa and describe sky as the *pada* (place) of Viṣṇu. Other knowers of the *Purāṇas* describe Him as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Person. There are some others again who declare that this creation cannot be done by a single individual. Some atheists say that this inconceivable infinite Universe can never be created by one God, so there is no such definite God that can be called its Creator. Though without any creator, this *brahmāṇḍa* is sprung from Nature and conducted by Her. The followers of the Sāṅkhya system say that Puruṣa is not the creator of this Universe; they declare that Prakṛti is the Mistress of this Universe.

O Muni! Thus I have expressed to you what the Muni Kapila, the Achārya of the Sāṅkhyas and the other philosophers declare as their opinions; various doubts, thus, reign always in my breast. Owing to these doubts my mind is so confused that I cannot arrive at any definite conclusion. My mind is very much unsettled as to what is *dharma* and what is *adharma*. What are the characteristics of *dharma?* I cannot make out them. For the Devas are all sprung from the *sattva-guṇa* and are always attached to the true *dharma;* yet they are frequently troubled by the sinful Dānavas. How, then, can I place my confidence on the permanence of the *dharma?* My forefathers the Pāṇḍavas were always endowed with good behavior and good actions, and they remained always in the path of *dharma;* yet they suffered a good deal of troubles and sufferings. In these cases it is very difficult understand the greatness of *dharma*. So, O Father! Seeing all these, my mind is thrown into a sea of doubts and troubles.

O Great Muni! There is nothing impracticable with you; so remove my doubts. O Muni! I am always plunged and raised and plunged again in this sea of delusion. So save me by lifting me on a boat of wisdom and carry me across this ocean of *saṁsāra* (this world)."

Thus ends the first chapter on the third Skandha on the questions put by Janamejaya in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhagāvatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—Rudra's celestial car

1-19. Vyāsa said: "O highly intelligent king! The questions that you have asked me today whence and how Brahmā, etc., were born and so on, are very difficult. In ancient days, once, on an occasion, I asked many questions like yours to Nārada Muni. At first he was greatly suprised to hear my queries; afterwards he gave due replies to them.

O king! I will answer to you in the same way; listen. Once I saw that the all-knowing, peaceful Nārada, the knower of the *Vedas* was sitting on the

banks of the Ganges. I became very glad and fell at his feet. By his order I took one excellent seat. Hearing, then, of his welfare and seeing him sitting on the sands I asked him: 'O highly intelligent One! Who is the Supreme Architect of this widely extended Universe? Whence is this *brahmāṇḍa* born? Is it eternal or temporary? When it is an effect, then it is natural that it cannot be created without a cause. Now when the cause, the creator, is certain, is he one or many?'

Nārada gave me the following reply: 'O Vyāsa! What shall I say to you on this point more than this that a doubt occurred to me also in my former days? The question that you have put to me today rose in my mind before, and I went to my father Brahmā of endless energy and asked to him thus: "O Lord! O Father! Whence is this whole *brahmāṇḍa* born? Have You created it? Or is it Viṣṇu or Maheśvara? O all-pervading soul! Who is there in this *brahmāṇḍa* fit to be worshipped? O Lord of the world! Who is the topmost Lord ruling over everything? Kindly say.

O Brahmāṇa! I am plunged in this sea of Māyā and perils; my heart is agitated with doubts; hence it is not appeased in any place of pilgrimage, or in thinking of any Deva or in practising any *sādhana* or in any other object. O Sinless one! Give me the answers duly and thus remove my doubts. O Tormentor of foes! Unless the highest truth is known, peace is not found. This heart, distracted in various ways, cannot rest fixed on one subject. Whom am I to remember? Whom to worship? Where to go? Whom to praise? Who is the Supreme God of this Universe? I do not understand these things!'

Hearing these my serious queries, Brahmā, the grandsire of all beings, replied to me as follows: 'O highly illustrious son! What more shall I say to you than this, that even Viṣṇu is unable to answer your questions; so difficult are they indeed! O great intelligent one! Nobody that is attached to the world knows anything about this. Those who are unattached to this world, who are free from any envy, these who are without desires and calm, those high-souled ones know the secret of all this.

In former days when all was water, water everywhere and all things moving and nonmoving were destroyed, when five elements were sprung, then I was also born from the lotus navel of Viṣṇu. Then not seeing Moon, Sun, trees, or mountains or anything, and sitting on the center (*karnikā*) of the lotus thought thus: "When I am born in this great ocean of waters? Who has created me? Who is now my protector? And Who will be my Destroyer when this cycle ends? There is no earth distinctly visible anywhere here; on what, then, this mass of water rests? Lotus is termed *paṅkaja* because it springs from mud and dirt; so unless there exists the earth underneath with mud and dirt, how this lotus will come out here! Now let me try and find out where is the root of this lotus, where is the mud and dirt? If this be found, then the earth will be also certainly there." Thus thinking, I dived underneath the water and searched for one thousand years but could not find earth anywhere, when the celestial voice entered my ears "Practice *tapasyā* (austerities)." Hearing this celestial voice, I sat on the lotus, my birthplace, and practiced *tapasyā* for one thousand years.

20-30. Next, the celestial voice came again "Create." Hearing this, I became quite confounded and began to think within myself "Now what am I to create? What to do?" After this, the two terrible Daityas, Madhu and Kaitabha came to me and affrighted me saying "Fight with us." I became quite terrified and holding the stem of the lotus, I got down within the water. There I saw a wonderful person, sleeping on the Ananta serpent. He was of a deep blue color like a raincloud, wearing yellow clothes, four-armed, garlanded with forest flowers, and the Lord of this whole Universe. On the four arms of this Mahā-Viṣṇu there were conchshells, disc, club, lotus and other weapons. I saw this Acyuta-Puruṣa, sleeping on the Ananta serpent bed, motionless and under the influence of *yoga-nidrā*. I then thought within myself "What am I to do?" Not being able to find out any other way, I recollected the Devī who was then of the nature of sleep, and began to praise Her. The auspicious Devī Yoga-Nidrā, whose form could not be determined, immediately left the body of Viṣṇu and decorated with divine ornaments, began to shine in the air. After She left the body of Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu immediately got up. And He fought terribly for five thousand

years with the Dānavas Madhu and Kaitabha; then by the grace of the Bhagavatī, He extended His own thighs and then, on those thighs, He slew the two demons. Where Viṣṇu and myself were standing, Rudra Deva came also and joined with us. Then we three saw the beautiful Devī in the celestial space.

31-40. We three, then, commenced to chant hymns to Her and She gladdened our hearts by Her gracious look and said: "O Brahmā! O Viṣṇu! O Rudra! The two great Daityas are slain. Now forsake your laziness and do your respective works of creating, preserving, and destroying the Universe; create your own abodes, and live in happiness; create, by your respective lordly powers, the fourfold beings." Hearing the Devī's gentle sweet words, we spoke: "O Mother! There is no wide earth here; all is one mass of infinite ocean. No five elements, no five *tanmātrās*, no sensual organs, no *guṇas*, nothing exist here; how can we then execute the works of creation, etc.?" Hearing our words, the Devī smiled. Immediately there came from the sky overhead a beautiful aerial car. The Devī said: "O Brahmā! O Viṣṇu! O Rudra! Get in this car without any fear. Today I will show you one wonderful thing." At Her word, we got into the beautiful car without any fear. It was decorated with various gems and jewels, bedecked with pearls, emitting sweet tinkling sounds of bells and looking as the abode of the celestials. Seeing us seated without any fear, She made the car get high up in the sky by Her force.'

Thus ends the second chapter of the third skandha on Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra's going towards the heavens on the celestial car, given by the Devī in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—seeing the Devī

1-5. Brahmā said: "We were very much astonished not to find water where our beautiful airplane landed us. We saw earth resonated with the sweet cooings of the cuckoos, filled with beautiful fruit-laden trees, forests and

gardens. Big rivers, wells, tanks, ponds, water-springs, small pools, women, men all are there. Next we saw, in front of us, a nice city enclosed by a divine wall, containing many sacrificial halls and various palatial buildings and magnificent edifices. Oh! We thought: It is Heaven! What a great wonder! Who built this?

6-11. Next we saw a king looking like a Deva is going out on a hunting excursion in the forest. The Devī Ambikā, Whom we saw before, is staying on the chariot. In an instant, our airplane, propelled by air got high up above the sky and reached in the twinkling of an eye at a lovely place. We saw there a divine Nandana garden. There Surabhi, the cow of plenty, was staying under the shade of the Parijāta tree. Close by her, there was an elephant with four tusks; and Menakā and other hosts of Apsarās were there with their various gestures and postures, playing, dancing and singing. There were hundreds of Yakṣas, Gandharvas and Vidyādharas within that Mandāra garden playing and singing. Within this there was the Lord Satakratu with Śachī, the daughter of Pulomā.

12-34. Next with great wonder we saw Varuṇa, the lord of the aquatic animals, Kuvera, Yama, Sūrya (sun), fire and the other Devas; then we saw that in our front, Indra the Lord of the Devas, was coming out from a well-decorated city. He was there situated in his palanquin, calm and quiet and carried by men. Then the airplane where we were situated climbed high in the sky, and in the twinkling of an eye, we reached Brahmā-loka, that is saluted by all the Devas. There Śambhu and Keśava were greatly bewildered to see the Brahmā of that place. In the council hall of Brahmā, the *Vedas* with their *Aṅgas*, the serpents, hills, oceans and rivers were seen.

Seeing all these, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara asked me: “O Four-faced one! Who is this eternal Brahmā?” I replied: “I do not know who is this Brahmā. Who am I? and who is He? why has this error come over me? You, too, also are gods so you can better ponder over it.”

Next our car, going with the swiftness of mind went in the twinkling of an eye, to the beautiful all-auspicious Kailāśa mountain surrounded by bliss-

giving Yakṣas. It was beautified by the Mandāra garden, resonated by the sweet cooings of Śukas and cuckoos and the sweet sounds of lutes and small drums and tabors. When we reached there we saw the five-faced, three-eyed Bhagavān Śashi Śekhara, with ten hands, wearing tiger skin, and the upper garment of elephant skin. He was then coming out of his abode, riding on a bull. His two sons, the great heroes, Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya, beautifully adorned, were attending Him as His bodyguards. Nandi and all other hosts were following Him, chanting victories to Him.

O Muni Narāda! we were greatly wondered to see another Śaṅkara, surrounded by the Matrikās. So much so, that perplexed with doubts, I sat down there. Next our airplane went on with the force of wind; and in an instant reached the abode of Vaikuṇṭha, the amusement court of Lakṣmī. O Sūta! There at Vaikuṇṭha, we saw a wonderful Manifestation of power. Our companion Viṣṇu was greatly surprised to see that excellent city. We saw there four-armed Viṣṇu, of the color of *ātasi* flower, wearing yellow garments, adorned with divine ornaments sitting on Garuḍa. Lakṣmī-Devī is fanning wonderful chowry to Him. Struck with wonder at the sight of the eternal Viṣṇu, we took our seat on the car and looked at one another.

Next the balloon ascended with the swiftness of wind; and, in the twinkling of an eye, reached to the ocean of nectar, the Sudhā-Sāgar, with waves playing sweetly on it. This ocean Sudhā Sāgara is filled with aquatic animals and agitated with ripples. We saw and went along, and came to a very wonderful place called the Maṇi Dvīpa (the island of gems) in the midst of the Ocean. It was adorned with Mandāra, Parijāta and other heavenly flower trees, with various beautiful carpets, with variegated trees Aśoka, Vakula, Ketakī, Champaka, Kuravaka, etc., adorned with lustrous gems and pearls. It was resonated with the sweet cooings of the cuckoos and the humming sounds of bees; and it presented the sound of a sweet harmonious music playing there.

35-67. Sitting on our airplane, we saw from a distance, within that Dvīpa, a beautiful cot known as *śivākāra* (i.e. whose four legs represent Brahmā,

Viṣṇu, Rudra, etc., and whose top portion represents Sadā-Śiva looking like a rainbow, with exquisitely beautiful carpet spread over it and decked with various gems and jewels and inlaid with pearls. We saw a Divine Lady, sitting on the cot, wearing a red garment and a garland of red cloth and bedewed with red sandal paste. Her eyes were dark-red; that beautiful faced red-lipped lady looked more beautiful than ten millions of lightning and ten millions of Lakṣmīs, and lustrous like the Sun. The Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī was sitting with a sweet smile on Her lips, holding in Her four hands noose, goad, and signs indicating as if She was ready to grant boons, and asking Her devotees to discard all fear. We never before saw such a form. Even the birds of that place repeat the mystic incantation *hṛīṁ* and serve that Lady, Who is of the color of the rising Sun, all-merciful, and in the full bloom of youth. That lotus-faced smiling lady was adorned with all the beauties of Nature. Her high breasts defied the lotus bud. She was holding various jewelled ornaments, e.g., armplates, bracelets, diadems, etc.

Her lotus-like face looked exceedingly beautiful with jewelled earrings of the shape of the Śrī Yantra (*yantra* of Tripurā Sundarī). Hrillekhā and other Deva girls were surrounding Her. There were Sakhis on the four sides—always chanting hymns to Maheśvarī, the Lady of the world. She was surrounded on Her all sides by Anaṅga, Kusuma and other Devīs. She was sitting in the middle of the Satkona (six-angled) Yantra. We were all wondered at the sight of this Wonderful Form never seen before and we thought: "Who is this Lady? What is Her name? we know nothing of Her from such a distance." Thus while we were gazing at Her, that four-armed Lady became gradually thousand-eyed, with thousand hands and thousand feet; so it seemed to us. O Nārada! We became very much embarrassed with doubts and thought within ourselves, "Is She Apsarā (nymph) or a Gandharva daughter or any other Deva Girl? who is She ?" At this juncture Bhagavān Viṣṇu saw closely the sweet-smiling Devī, and by his intelligence came to a definite conclusion and spoke to us: "This is the Devī Bhagavatī Mahāvidyā Mahā-Māyā, undecaying and eternal; She is the Full, the Prakṛti; She is the Cause of us all. This Devī is inconceivable to

those who are of dull intellects; only the *yogīs* can see Her by their *yogik* powers. She is eternal (Brahman) and also non-eternal (Māyā). She is the Will-force of the Supreme Self. She is the First Creatrix of this world.

This Devī with wide eyes, the Lady of the Universe, has produced the *Vedas*. The less-fortunate persons cannot worship Her. During the time of *pralaya*, She destroys all the Universe, draws within Her body all the subtle bodies (*liṅga-sarīras*), and plays. O two Devas! At present She is residing in the form of the Seed of the Universe. Behold! On Her sides are seen duly all the *vibhūtis* (Manifestations of powers). They are all adorned with divine ornaments, anointed with divine scents and are serving Her. O Brahmā! O Śaṅkara! Today we are blessed and highly fortunate that we have got the sight of this Devī. The *tapasyā* (asceticisms) that we practiced of yore have yielded to us this fruit. Else why Bhagavatī has shown so carefully Her own form? Those who are highly meritorious by *tapasyā* and gifts of abundant wealth, those high-souled persons are able to see this all-auspicious Bhagavatī. The person attached to sensual objects can never see Her. It is She that is the Mūlā-Prakṛti, united with the Chidānanda Person. It is She that creates this *brahmāṇḍa* and exhibits it to the Paramātmā (the Supreme Self).

O two Devas! This whole Universe, all the Seers and Seen and other things contained therein, owe to Her as their sole cause. She is the Māyā assuming all forms; She is the Goddess of all. Where is I myself? Where are the Devas? Where are Lakṣmī and the other Devīs? We cannot compare to one-hundred thousandth part of Her. It is this all-excellent Lady, Whom I saw in the great Ocean when She reckoned Me who was baby then with greatest gladness. In former days, when I was sleeping on the cot made of immoveable fixed leaves of a banyan tree and licking my toe, making it enter within my mouth and playing like an ordinary baby, this Lady rocked my body gently to and fro on the banyan leaves, singing songs like a Mother. Now I recollect all what I felt before at Her sight and recognize that She is the Bhagavatī. These very things I now communicate to you. Hear attentively that She is this Lady and She is Our Mother."

Thus ends the third chapter of the Third Skandha on seeing the Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—hymns to the Great Devī by Viṣṇu

1-20. Brahmā said: "Thus speaking, Bhagavān Janārdana Viṣṇu spoke to me again: 'Come, let us bow down to Her again and again, and let us go to Her. We shall reach at Her feet fearlessly and we will chant hymns to Her; Mahā-Māyā will be pleased with us and will grant us boons. If the guards at the entrance prevent us from going, we would stand at the gateway and we will chant hymns to the Devī with one mind.'

Brahmā said: "When Hari addressed us in the above way, we two became choked by intense feelings of joy; our voice became tremulous and we waited there for some time; our hearts were elated with joy to go to Her. We then accepted Hari's word said *āūṁ*, got down from our car and went with hastened steps and with fear to the gate. Seeing us standing at the gateway, the Devī Bhagāvatī smiled and within an instant transformed us three into females. We looked like beautiful and youthful women, adorned with nice ornaments; thus we greatly wondered and went to Her. Seeing us standing at Her feet in feminine forms, the beautiful Devī Bhagāvatī looked on us with eyes of affection. We then bowed to the great Devī, looked at one another and stood before Her in that feminine dress. We three, then, began to see the pedestal of the great Devī, shining with the luster of ten million Suns and decorated with various gems and jewels. We next discerned that thousands and thousands of attendants are waiting on Her. Some of them are wearing red dresses, some blue dresses, some yellow dresses; thus the Deva girls, variously dressed were serving Her and standing by Her side. They were dancing, singing and playing musical instruments, and were gladly chanting hymns in praise of the Devī.

O Nārada! We saw there another wonderful thing. Listen. We saw the whole universe, moving and non-moving within the nails of the lotus feet

of the Devī. We saw there myself, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Vāyu, Agṇi, Yama, Moon, Sun, Varuṇa, Tvastā, Indra, Kuvera and other Devas, Apsarās, Gandharvas, rivers, oceans, mountains, Visvāvasus, Chitraketu, Sveta, Chitrāngada, Nārada, Tumburu, Hā Hā Hū Hū and other Gandharvas, the twin Aśvins, the eight Vasus, Sādhyas, Siddhas, the Pitṛs, Ananta and other Nāgas, Kinnaras, Uragas, Rākṣasas, the abode of Vaikuṇṭha, the abode of Brahmā, Kailaśa mountain, the best of all mountains—all were existing there. Within that nail of the toe were reflected all the things of the Universe. The lotus whence I was born, the four-faced Brahmā like myself on that lotus, Bhagavān Jagannāth lying on that bed of Ananta, the two Demons Madhu and Kaitabha, all I saw there.

21-31. Seeing all these wonderful things within the nails of Her lotus feet, I became greatly surprised and thought timidly: "What are all these?!" My companions Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara were struck with wonder. We three, then, made out that She was our Mother of the universe.

Thus full one hundred years passed away in seeing the various glories of the Devī in the auspicious nectar-like Maṇidvīpa; as long we were there, Her attendants, the Deva girls adorned with various ornaments gladly considered us as Sakhīs. We, too, were greatly fascinated by their enchanting gestures and postures. For that reason, we saw always their beautiful movements with great gladness. Once on an occasion, Bhagavān Viṣṇu, while He was in that feminine form, chanted hymns in praise of the great Devī Śrī Bhuvaneśvarī.

Śrī Bhagavān said: 'Salutation to the Devī Prakṛti, the Creatrix; I bow down again and again to Thee. Thou art all-auspicious and grantest the desires of Thy devotees; Thou art of the nature of *siddhi* (spiritual success) and *vṛddhi* (increase). I bow down again and again to Thee. I bow down to the World Mother, Who is of the nature of Everlasting Existence, Intelligence and Bliss.

O Devī! Thou createst, preservest and destroyest this Universe; Thou doest the *pralaya* (the great Dissolution) and showest favor to the created beings.

Thus Thou art the Authoress of the above five-fold things that are done; so, O Bhuvaneśvarī, I bow down to Thee! Thou art the great efficient and material cause of the changeful. Thou art the Unchangeable, Immoveable Consciousness; Thou art the half-letter (*ardhamātrā*), *hṛllekhā* (the consciousness that ever pervades both inside and outside the Universe, denoted by the *bīja-mantra* ***hṛīṁ***); Thou art the Supreme Soul and the individual soul. Salutation again and again to Thee!

O Mother! I now realize fully well that this whole Universe rests on Thee; it rises from Thee and again melts away in Thee. The creation of this Universe shows Thy infinite force. Verily, Thou art become Thyself all these *lokas* (planetary regions). During the time of creation Thou createst the two formless elements *akāśā* and *vāyu* and the three elements with form—fire, water, and earth—then with these Thou createst the whole Universe and showest this to the Enjoyer Puruṣa, who is of the nature of consciousness, for His satisfaction. Thou again dost become the material cause of the twenty-three *tattvas: mahat*, etc., as enumerated in the Sāṅkhya system and appearest to us like a mirage.

32. O Mother! Were it not for Thee, no object would be visible, Thou pervadest the whole Universe. It is for this reason that those persons that are wise declare that even the Highest Puruṣa can do no work without Thy aid.

33-34. O Devī! Thou createst and art giving satisfaction to the whole Universe by Thy power; again at the time of *pralaya* Thou swallowest forcibly all these that are seen. So, O Devī! Who can fathom Thy powers? O Mother! Thou didst save us from the hands of Madhu and Kaitabha. Then Thou hast brought us to this Maṇi-Dvīpa and showed us Thy own form, all the extended regions and immense powers and given us exquisite delight and joy. This is the highest place of happiness.

35-37. O Mother! When I Myself, Śaṅkara and Brahmā or anyone of us is unable to fathom Thy inconceivable glory, who else can then ascertain Thee? O Bhavānī! Who knows how many more than the several regions

that we saw reflected in thy nails of Thy feet, exist in Thy creation? O One endowed with infinitely great powers! O Devī! we saw another Viṣṇu, another Hara, another Brahmā, all of great celebrity in the Universe exhibited by Thee; who knows how many other such Brahmās, etc., exist in Thy other Universes? Thy glory is infinite. O Mother! I bow down again and again to Thy lotus feet and pray to Thee that this Thy form may exist always in my mind. May my mouth always utter Thy name, and may my two eyes see always Thy lotus feet.

38-43. O Revered One! May I remember Thee as my Goddess and may Thou constantly look on myself as Thy humble servant. O Mother! What more shall I say than this: May this relation as mother and son always exist between Thee and me. O World-Mother! There is nothing in this world that is not known to Thee, for Thou art omniscient. So O Bhavānī! What more shall my humble self declare to Thee? Now dost Thou do whatever Thou desirest. O Devī! The rumour goes that Brahmā is the Creator, Viṣṇu is the Preserver, and Maheśvara is the Destroyer! Is this true? O Eternal One! It is only through Thy will power, through Thy force, that we create, preserve and destroy.

O Daughter of the Himālaya mountain! The earth is supporting this Universe; it is Thy endless might that is holding all this made of five elements. O Grantress of boons! It is through Thy power and luster that the Sun is lustrous and becomes visible. Though Thou art the attributeless Self, yet by Thy Māyic power Thou appearest in the form of this *prapañca* Universe. When Brahmā, Maheśa, and I myself take birth by Thy power and are not eternal, what more can be said of Indra and other Devas than this: that they are mere temporary things and created. It is only Thou that art Eternal, Ancient Prakṛti and the Mother of this Universe.

O Bhavānī! Now I realize from my remaining with Thee, that it is Thou that dost impart, out of mercy, the *brahmā-vidyā* to the ancient Puruṣa; and thus He can realize His eternal nature. Otherwise He will remain always under delusion that He is the Lord, He is the Puruṣa without beginning, that He is

good and the Universal Soul, and thus suffers under various forms of egoism (*ahaṅkāra*).

Thou art the Vidyā of the intelligent persons and the *śakti* of the beings endowed with force; Thou art *kīrtī* (fame), *kānti* (luster), *kamalā* (wealth) and the spotless *tuṣṭi* (peace, happiness). Amongst men, Thou art dispassion, leading to *mukti* (complete freedom from bondage). Thou art the Gāyatrī, the mother of the *Vedas;* and Thou art Svahā, Svadhā, etc. Thou art the Bhāgavatī, of the nature of the three *guṇas;* Thou art the half *mātrā* (*bindu* or the dot in the glyph of *āūṁkara*), the fourth state *turīya*, transcending the *guṇas*. It is Thou that givest always the *śāstras* for the preservation of the Devas and the Brahmāṇas.

It is Thou that hast expanded and manifested this whole phenomenon of the visible Universe for the liberation of the embodied souls (*jīvas*), the parts of the pure holy Brahmān, the Full, the Beginningless, the Deathless, forming the waves of the infinite expanse of ocean. When the *jīva* comes to know internally and becomes thoroughly conscious that all this is Thy work, Thou createst and destroyest, that all this is Thy *māyik* pastime, false, like the parts of an actor in a theatrical play, then and then only he desists forever from his part in this theater of world.

O Mother! O Destroyer of the greatest difficulties! I always take refuge unto Thee. Thou dost save me from this ocean of *saṁsāra*, full of *moha* (delusion). When my end will come, Let Thou be my Savior from these infinitely troublesome and unreal pains arising from love and hatred. Obeisance to Thee! O Devī! O Mahā-vidyā! I fall prostrate at Thy feet. O Thou, the Giver of all desires! O Auspicious One! Dost Thou give the knowledge that is All-Light to Me.'

Thus ends the fourth chapter of the Third Skandha on the hymns to the Great Devī by Viṣṇu in the MahāPurāṇa Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—hymns by Hara and Brahmā

1. Brahmā said: "O Nārada! Thus speaking, Viṣṇu stopped; Śaṅkara the Destroyer then stepped in, and bowing down to the Devī said:

2. 'O Devī! If Hari be born by Thy power and the lotus-born Brahmā have come into existence from Thee, why, then, I who of *tamo-guṇa* be not born of Thee! O Auspicious One! Thou art clever in creating all the *lokas!* What wonder is there in My being created by Thee?

3. O Mother! Thou art the earth, water, air, *ākāsa* and fire. Thou art, again, the organs of senses and the organs of perception; Thou art *buddhi*, mind and *ahaṅkāra* (egotism).

4. Those who say that Hari, Hara, and Brahmā are respectively the Preserver, the Destroyer and the Creator of this whole Universe don't know anything. All the three, above mentioned, are created by Thee; then they perform always their respective functions; their sole refuge being Thyself.

5. O Mother! If the Universe be created of the five elements—earth, water, air, fire and ether, having the properties of smell, taste, touch, sight and sound respectively—then how these five elements, possessing attributes and of the nature of effects can come into manifestation without their being born from Thy *cit* portion (intelligence)?

6. O Auspicious Mother! It is Thou in the shape of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, Who art creating this Universe, and it is Thou that hast assumed the forms of this whole Universe, both moving and non-moving. Thus Thou playest, as it wills Thee, under various forms, again and again. Thou dost cease from play (during *pralaya*) as Thou like.

7. O Mother! When Brahmā, Viṣṇu and I become desirous to create the world, we execute our duties by taking the dust (earth, etc.) of Thy lotus feet.

8. O Mother! It it were not Thy mercy, then how Brahmā could have become endowed with *rajo-guṇa*, Viṣṇu with *sattva-guṇa* and I with *tamo-guṇa?*

9. O Mother! If there were no differences observed in Thy mind, then why hast Thou created in this world rich and poor, king and councillors, servants, etc., various classes of beings? Why hast Thou not created all alike happy or all alike miserable?

10. So Thou wilt have to show Thy mercy towards me. Thy three *guṇas* are capable at all times to create, preserve and destroy the world; then Hari, Hara and Brahmā, whom Thou hast created as the apparent cause of the three worlds, is simply Thy will.

11-12. O Bhavānī! If Thy *guṇas* had no power in the acts of creation, etc., then how can the fact that while we three Hari, Brahmā and I were coming in the airplane, we saw on our way new worlds created by Thee, be possible? Kindly dost Thou speak on this. O World-Mother! It is Thou that desirest to create, preserve, and destroy this world by Thy part *māyik* power. Thou art always enjoying with Puruṣa, Thy husband. O Śivā! We cannot fathom Thy inscrutable ways.

13-15. O auspicious one! How can we understand Thy sport? O Mother! We are transformed into young women before Thee; let us serve Thy lotus feet. If we get our manhood, we will be deprived from serving Thy feet and thus of the greatest happiness. O Mother! O Sire! I do not like to leave Thy lotus feet and get my man-body again and reign in the three worlds. O Beautiful-faced one! Now that I have got this youthful feminine form before Thee, there is not a trace of desire within me to get again my masculine form. What use is there in getting manhood, what happiness is there if I do not get sight of Thy lotus feet!

16-18. O Mother! Let this unsullied fame of mine be spread over in the three worlds that I have got, in this young womanly form, the chance of serving Thy lotus feet, that have this effect that the idea of 'world' goes

away. Who is there that will leave Thy service and desire to enjoy a foeless kingdom in the world? Oh! even a moment appears a *yuga* to him who has not got Thy lotus feet with him! O Mother! Those that leave the worship of Thy lotus feet and become engaged in performing *tapasyā* are certainly deprived of the best thing by the Creator, though their minds be pure and holy. Their power from their *tapasyā* may be acquired and they be entitled for *mukti;* yet they get dire defeat from not having Thee.

19. O Unborn One! Austerities, control of passions, enlightenment or performance of sacrifices as ordained in the *Vedas*, nothing can save from this ocean of *saṁsāra*. It is the devotional worship of Thy lotus feet that alone can make one attain the Beatitude. O Devī! If Thou be extremely merciful towards me, then initiate me in that wonderful holy *mantra* of Thine; I will repeat that omnipotent par-excellent nine-lettered *mantra* of Caṇḍīkā Devī and be happy.

20-26. O Mother! In my former birth I got the nine-lettered *mantra* but now I have forgotten it O Tarinī! O Savior! Give me today that *mantra* and save me from this ocean of world.'

Brahmā said: "When Śiva of wonderful fire and energy, said this, the Devī Ambikā clearly uttered the nine-lettered *mantra*. Mahādeva accepted the *mantra* and became very glad. He fell down at the feet of the Devī, and then and there began to repeat the nine-lettered *mantra* together with the *bīja* (seed-syllable) that yields desires and liberation (*klīṁ*), and can be easily pronounced.

Note: The nine-lettered *mantra* is *āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ Caṇḍīkāyai namaḥ*.

When I saw Śaṅkara, the Auspicious One to all the *lokas*, in that state, I fell down also at the feet of the Devī and spoke to Mahā-Māyā: O Mother! The *Vedas* are unable to ascertain Thy nature; for, in the performances of sacrifices and other minor actions, they do not mention Thy full Nature, the

Ordainer of all, but mention simply Indra and minor deities and Svāhā Devī, a portion of Thy essence as the presiding deities of the sacrificial offerings and oblations. But actually, O Devī! it is Thou that hast been extolled in this Universe as the Universal Consciousness, all-knowing and transcending all the Devas and all the *lokas*.

27. I have created this greatly wondrous Universe; I am the Lord of this *brahmāṇḍa*. Who is there more powerful than me in these three worlds? When I am Brahmā, transcending all the *lokas*, then I am blessed; there is no doubt about this. By reason of this vanity I am plunged in this widely extended ocean of *saṁsāra*.

28-31. That now I have been able to get the dust of Thy lotus feet, has now made me really proud; and truly I am blessed today and by Thy grace this manifestation of pride on my part has become quite justified. Thou destroyest the fear of this *saṁsāra* and givest *mukti*. So, O Goddess! pray unto Thee that Thou dost cut asunder this iron chain of my delusion, full of great troubles, and make me devoted to Thee.

O Auspicious One! I am born from the lotus discovered by Thee; now I am extremely anxious how I can get *mukti*. I am Thy obedient servant; I am merged in the delusion of this ocean of world. Save me, O Śivā! from this *saṁsāra*. Those who do not know Thy character, think that I am the Creator and Lord of this Universe; but those who do not worship Thee, and worship Indra and other Devas, and perform sacrifices to attain Heaven are certainly ignorant of Thy glory. O Prime Māyā! Thou art the Eternal Mahā-Māyā! It is Thou that dost want to play this world-play, and for that purpose hast created me as Brahmā. Then I created these four sorts of beings, engendered by heat and moisture (said of insects and worms), those that are oviparous, those that are sprung from germs or shoots, and those that are born from womb, viviparous and exhibit my pride, that 'I am omniscient'. So forgive this sin of mine, this my pride.

32-37. O Mother ! Those ignorant persons blinded by passion, who take recourse to the eightfold *yoga* and *samādhi* and labor under it, do not know

for certain that they would get *mokṣa* if they utter Thy name, even under a pretext. O Bhavānī! are they not deluded by error and blinded by passion for this world, who discriminate only the *tattvas* (essences) and forget Thy name? For it is Thou that dost give *mukti* from this world. O Thou Unborn! Can Hari, Hara, and other ancient persons who have realized the highest Truth forget even for a second Thy holy character and Thy names Śivā, Ambikā, Śakti, Iśvarī and others? Canst Thou not create, by Thy mere glance, this fourfold creation?

In fact, for mere recreation and will, it is Thou that hast made me as a Creator from the earliest times. Is it not that Thou didst save Hari in the ocean from the two Daityas Madhu and Kaitabha? Is it not again the fact that Thou destroyest Hara, even who is the great destroyer, when Thou dissolvest the creation? Otherwise why is it that Hara becomes born from my eyebrows at the time of fresh creation? So Hari is not the Preserver of all. Hara is not the Destroyer of all. Had they been such, why would they be preserved and destroyed respectively by Thee? So Thou alone art the Creatrix and Preservatrix of all. O Bhavānī; no one has heard of or seen Thee taking birth; nobody knows whence Thou art born. Thou art, indeed, the One and only Śakti! Not even the four *Vedas* can make one understand Thy Nature.

O Mother! It is only by Thy help that I am able to create this creation; Hari, to preserve; and Hara, to destroy. Without Thy aid, we are able to do nothing. There is nobody in this world, born or that was born or that will be born, who does not become doubtful as we are. This Thine wondrously variegated Universe, full of Thy *līlā*, consisting in variety, is the common ground of dispute of the imperfect intellects; who are not deluded here! In this *samsārā*, full of things visible and invisible, there is another one who is more ancient than Thee? is there is another Highest Person who is Thy substratum? If it be argued nicely, it will be seen that there is no other third Person that can be proved as far as evidences or proofs go to measure it. The wise persons, knowing all the laws, declare that there is the One God—attributeless, inactive, without any object in view, without any *upādhi* or

adjunct, without any parts, who is the witness of Thy widely-extended *līlā:* "One alone exists; and that is Brahmān, and there is nothing else." This is the saying of the *Vedas*.

Now I feel in my mind a doubt as to the discrepancy with this Vedic saying. I cannot say that the *Veda* is false. So I ask Thee: Art Thou the Brahmān, the one and the secondless that is mentioned in the *Vedas?* or is some other Person Brahman? Kindly solve this doubt of mine. My mind is not completely free from doubts; this little mind is still discussing whether the Reality is dual or one; I cannot solve it myself. So dost Thou say from Thy mouth, and cut my doubts asunder. Whether Thou art male or female, describe in detail to me. So that, knowing the Highest Śakti, I will be freed from this ocean of *saṁsāra*."

Thus ends the fifth chapter of the Third Skandha on the chanting of hymns by Hara and Brahmā in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—Devī's Vibhutis (powers)

1-10. Brahmā said: "When I thus asked with great humility, the Devī Bhāgavatī, the Prime Śakti, She addressed me thus in the following sweet words: 'There is oneness always between me and the Puruṣa; there is no difference whatsoever at any time between Me and the Puruṣa (the Supreme Male Self). Who is I, that is Puruṣa; who is Puruṣa, that is I. The apparent difference between force and the receptacle of force is due to error. He who knows the subtle difference between us two is certainly intelligent; he is freed from this bondage of *saṁsāra;* there is no manner of doubt in this. The One Secondless Eternal everlasting Brahman substance becomes dual at the time of creation. As a lamp, though one, becomes two by virtue of adjuncts; as a face, though one, becomes two as reflected in a mirror; as one man becomes double by his shadow, we become reflected into many, by virtue of different *antaḥ-karaṅas* (*buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*) created by Māyā. The necessity of creation, again and again, after the *prākriti-*

pralaya is due to the fructification of those *karmas* of the *jīvas*, whose fruits were not enjoyed before the *pralayas;* so when creation again commences, the above said differences are found to appear; Brahman is the material cause of these changes; without Brahman as the basis, the existence of Māyā is simply impossible. It is therefore that in Māyā and Māyā's action, Brahman is interwoven. For this reason as many differences are found in Māyā, so many differences exist in Brahman.

The Māyā and Brahman appear as two, and hence all the differences, visible and invisible, have come forth. Only during creation are these differences conceived. When everything melts away—when there comes the *pralaya* or general dissolution—then I am not female, I am not male, nor I am hermaphrodite. I then remain as Brahman with Māyā latent in it. During the time of creation I am Śrī (wealth), Buddhi (intellect), Dhṛti, (fortitude), Smṛti (recollection), Śraddhā (faith), Medhā (intelligence), Dayā (mercy), Lajjā (modesty), Kṣudhā (hunger), Tṛṣṇā (thirst), Kṣamā (forgiveness), Akṣamā (non-forgiving), Kānti (luster), Śānti (peace), Pipāsā (thirst), Nidrā (sleep) Tandrā (drowsiness), Jarā (old age), Ajarā (youth), Vidyā (knowledge), Avidyā (ignorance), Spṛhā (desires), Vānchhā (desires), Śakti (force), Aśakti (non-force), Vasā (fat), Majjā (marrow), Tvāk (skin), Dṣṛṭi (sight), Satyāsatya Vākya (true and untrue words) and it is I that become Parā, Madhyamā, Paśyanti (the three stages of speech), the innumerable Nādis (tubular organs of the body, e. g., arteries, veins, intestines, blood vessels, pulses, etc.); there are three *koti* and a half *nādis* (35 million *nādis*).

11-13. O Brahmā! See what substance is there in this *saṁsāra* that is separate from Me? And what can you imagine anything with which I am not connected? So know this as certain that I am these all forms. O Creator! Say, is there any such thing, where you will not see My above-mentioned positive form? So in this creation, I am one, and I am many as well, in various forms. Know this as certain that it is I, that assuming the names of all the various Devas, exist in so many forms of *śaktis*. It is I that manifest power and wield strength.

14-27. O Brahmā! I am Gaurī, Brāhmī, Raudrī, Vārāhī, Vaiṣṇavī, Śivā, Vārunī, Kauverī, Nāra Sinhī, and Vāsavī *śaktis*. I enter in every substance, in everything of the nature of effect. Making that Puruṣa the instrument, I do all the actions. Puruṣa is only the efficient cause, the immediate agent. I am the coolness in water, the heat in fire, the luster in the Sun, the cooling rays in the Moon; and thus I manifest my my strength. O Brahmā! Verily, I tell you this as certain that if this universe be abandoned by Me, it becomes motionless. If I leave Śaṅkara, he will not be able to kill the Daityas. A very weak man is declared to be as without any strength; he is not said to be without Rudra, or without Viṣṇu, nobody says like this; everyone says, he is without strength, without *śakti*. Those who get fallen, tumbled, afraid, quiet, or defeated under one's enemies are called powerless; no one says that this man is Rudraless and so forth. So the creation that you perform, know *śakti*, power to be the cause thereof. When you will be endowed with that *śakti*, you will be able to create this whole Universe. Hari, Rudra, Indra, Agṇi, Chandra, Sūrya, Yama, Viśvakarmā, Varuṇa Pavana, and other Devas all are able to do their *karmas* when they are united with their respective *śaktis*. This Earth, when united with *śakti*, remains fixed and becomes capable to hold all the *jīvas* and beings. And if this Earth be devoid of force, She cannot hold an atom even.

Thus Ananta, Kūrma and all the other elephants of the eight points of the compass become able to do their respective works only by My help, when united with Me, the Force. O Lotus-born! If I wish I can drink all the fire and waters today and I can hold wind in check. I do whatever I wish. If I say that I am creating this world, then the inconsistency arises thus: 'When I am everything, since I am eternal being, all this universe made up of *prapañca*, becomes eternal. Whereas this universe is not eternal, in the sense that it is changing.' If it were said that this universe is different from Me, then My saying that I am everything becomes inconsistent. Thinking thus, do not plunge yourself in the doubt as to the reality, origin and separateness of the non-eternal universe. For how can that which is unreal come into existence? The unreal substances can never come into existence; as the child of a barren woman or the flowers in the sky are simply absurd.

What is real can only be born. In discussing about origin, birth, etc., the appearance and disappearance of real things is called their birth and dissolution. In the cold of earth there exists the previous existence of the pot, and this is the cause of the appearance of the pot; the disappearance of the pot exists in the pot; hence this disappearance is the cause of the destruction of the pot. Thus the appearance and disappearance of the causal eternal things are called the Origin and *pralaya*. Similarly in discussing the causal nature, there does not arise any inconsistency in My being everything.

28-48. So there is nothing to fear. In discussing about the reality of effects, this is to be conceived, that today there does not exist here the earth in the form of jar, if it is destroyed, where it has gone? The conclusion is that the earth in the form of the pot exists in atoms. O Brahmā! All substances eternal, existing for a moment only, the void, and the substances of nature, real and unreal both, all are due to a cause.

Ahaṅkāra is born first among them. Thus substances are of seven kinds: *mahat*, etc. O Unborn One! *Mahat-tattva* first arises from Prakṛti; from *Mahat-tattva* springs *ahaṅkāra;* and from *ahaṅkāra;* arises other substances. Thus, in this order, you go on creating this Universe. O Brahmā! Now you better go to your respective places, and after creating the Universe, remain there and perform your respective functions ordained by your *prārabdha-karma*. Take this beautiful great Śakti Mahā-Sarasvatī, full of *rajo-guṇa*, and of a smiling nature. This *Śakti*, wearing white clothes, adorned with divine ornaments and sitting on Varāsana, will always be your playmate. This beautiful woman will always be your boon companion; consider Her as My *vibhuti* (manifestation of power), and so most worshipful. Never show any sort of disrespect towards Her. Take Her and go immediately to Satyaloka; and from the seed of *mahat-tattva*, create the fourfold beings. The subtle bodies (*liṅga-sarīra*) and *karmas* are remaining mixed up with each other. Separate them, as before, duly, in due time.

Now go on as before and according to *kāla* (time), *karma*, and *svabhāva* (nature), join them with their respective attributes (sounds and other qualities); in other words bestow fruits according to their *guṇas* and *prārabdha-karmas*, and to the time when these fruits are due.

Viṣṇu is prominent in *sattva-guṇa* and hence superior to you. So you should always respect and worship Him. Whenever any difficulty will come to you, Viṣṇu will come down on earth to fulfil your ends. Janārdan Viṣṇu will sometimes be born in the wombs of birds and animals, sometimes in the wombs of men, and destroy the Dānavas. The highly powerful Mahādeva, too, will help you. Now create the Devas and enjoy as you like. The *Brahmāṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyās* will worship you with devotion in various sacrifices, endowed with due sacrificial fees. All the Devas will be always satisfied when my name "Svāhā" will be uttered in the sacrificial oblations and ceremonies.

Śiva, incarnate of *tamo-guṇa* will be revered and worshipped by all persons in every sacrifice. When the Devas will be frightened by the Daityas, then Vārāhī, Vaiṣṇavī, Gaurī, Narasimhī, Śacī, Śiva and My other *śaktis* will take excellent bodies and destroy your fear. So, O Lotus-born! Be at your ease and do work. You utter and repeat my nine-lettered *mantra* with *bīja* and *dhyān*, and do your work.

O highly intelligent one! This nine-lettered *mantra* is the best of all the *mantras*. You are to keep this *mantra* within your heart, for the accomplishment of all your ends.'

Thus saying to me, Bhagavatī smiled and began to say to Viṣṇu: 'O Viṣṇu! Take this beautiful Mahā-Lakśmī and go. She will always reside within your breast; there is no doubt about this. This all-auspicious giving *śakti* I give to you for your enjoyment. You should always show respect to Her; never show hatred or contempt. For the good of the world, I unite thus Lakśmī and Nārāyan. For your sustenance I create *yajña*. You three will act together in harmony unanimously.

You, Brahmā and Śiva are my three Devas, born of my *guṇas*. You three will undoubtedly be respected and worshipped by the world. The stupid man who will find any difference between you three will go to hell; there is no doubt about this. He who is Hari, is Śiva; He who Śiva is Hari; to make difference between these will lead one to hell. So Brahmā is one and the same with Śiva and Viṣṇu; there no manner of doubt in this. O Viṣṇu! But there are other differences in their *guṇas;* I will tell this; listen, as far as meditation of the Supreme Self is concerned, you will have *sattva-guṇa* predominant within you; *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa* will be secondary. In various other pursuits and *vikāras* (changes) better have *rajo-guṇa* with Lakśmī and always enjoy Her.

49-85. O Lord of Ramā! I give you *vāk-bīja* (*aiṁ*), *kāma-bīja* (*klīṁ*), and *māyā-bīja* (*hṛīṁ*) that will lead you to the highest end. Take this *mantra* and repeat it and enjoy as you like. O Viṣṇu! By this, the danger of death, caused by *kāla*, will never come to you. When the creation of this Universe will be completely done, I will then destroy this whole thing, moving and non-moving. You all will then be dissolved in Me. You should add *praṇava* (*āūṁ*) to this *mantra* with *kāma-bīja* leading to *mokṣa,* and repeat it always with auspicious motives. O Puruṣottama! Build your Vaikuṇṭha-purī; live there and think of this My Eternal Form and enjoy as you like.'

Brahmā said: "Saying thus to Vāsudeva, that Higher Prakṛti Devī who is all of the three *guṇas* and yet transcending them, began to address Mahādeva, the Deva of the Devas, in sweet words, thus: 'O Śaṅkara! Accept this beautiful Mahā-Kālī Gaurī, build a new Kailāśa city and live there happily. Your primary *guṇa* will be *tamas; sattva* and *rājas* will be your secondary *guṇas*. Have recourse to *rajo-* and *tamo-guṇas* while you slay the Asuras, and thus wander. O sinless Śaṅkara! Have recourse to peaceful *sattva-guṇa* when you reflect on the Supreme Self and practice austerities.

You all are for creating, preserving and destroying the Universe and you are all of the three *guṇas*. There is no such thing in this world as are devoid of these three *guṇas*. Everything that is visible is endowed with the three

guṇas, and whatever will be or was before cannot exist without them. Only the Supreme Self is without these *guṇas;* but He is not visible. O Śaṅkara! I am the Parā-Prakṛti; at times I appear with *guṇas;* and at others I remain without any *guṇas*. O Śambhu! I am always of the causal nature; never I am of the nature of effect. When I am causal, I am with *guṇas;* and when I am before the Highest Puruṣa, I am then without any *guṇas* on account of my remaining in the state of equilibrium (*sāmyā-vasthā*). *Mahat-tattva*, *ahaṅkāra*, and sound, touch, etc., all the *guṇas* perform the work of *saṁsāra* day and night, each preceding one being the cause and each subsequent one being the effect; never do they cease in their activities.

From the Reality (*sat-vastu*) springs *ahaṅkāra* (*avyakta*); therefore I am of the nature of causality; again *ahaṅkāra* is embodied with the three *guṇas*, and so the Paṇḍitas call it as an effect of Mine. From *ahaṅkāra* arises *mahat-tattva;* this is denominated as *buddhi*. So *mahat-tattva* is the effect and *ahaṅkāra* is its cause. From *mahat-tattva* arises again another *ahaṅkāra;* from this second *ahaṅkāra* arise the five *tanmātrās* or subtle elements. From these five *tanmātrās*, the five gross elements arise after a process called *pancīkarana*. From the *sāttvika* part of the five *tanmātrās*, arise the five organs of perception; from their *rājasik* part, the five organs of action come; from their *pancīkarana*, came the five gross elements; from the *sāttvika* portion of all the five elements comes mind. Thus sixteen things come into existence. These organs of perception, etc., and other effects together with the *mahā-bhūtas* form one *gaṇa* composed of the sixteen categories. The original Puruṣa is the Supreme Self; He is neither cause nor is He any effect. O Śambhu! At the beginning of the creation, all the above things are born in the way already indicated. Thus I have described to you in brief about the creation. O Devas! Now get up in your airplane, go to your respective places and fulfil your respective duties. Whenever you get into any dire distress, then remember Me; I will appear before you. O Devas! You should remember always the Eternal Supreme Self (Brahman) and Me. When you will remember us both, all your actions, will, no doubt, be crowned with success.'

Brahmā said: "Bhagavatī Durgā gave us *śaktis*, full of Divine beauty and luster; She gave Mahā-Lakṣmī to Viṣṇu, Mahā-Kāli to Śiva, and Mahā-Sarasvatī to me, and bade goodbye to us. Thus given farewell to by the Devī, we three went to another place and were born as males. We thought of the very wonderful nature and influence of the Devī as we got upon our divine airplane. When we ascended, we saw there was no Maṇidvīpa, there was no Devī, there was no ocean of nectar, nothing whatsoever. Save our airplane, we did not see anything. We then got into our wide airplane and reached there where Viṣṇu killed the two indomitable Daityas, in the great ocean, where I was born from the lotus."

Thus ends the Sixth Chapter of the Third Skandha on the description of the Devī's Vibhutis (powers) in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣī Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—the creation and the Tattvas

1. Brahmā said: 'O Nārada! Thus we three—I, Viṣṇu, and Mahādeva—saw that highly effulgent Goddess: we also saw separately Her attendant goddesses, one after another—that form, as it were, a veil to her—who were also preeminently grand.'

2-3. Vyāsa said: "O king! Nārada, the foremost of the Munis, hearing thus his father's words, was exceedingly pleased and asked: 'O Grandsire of all the lokas! Now describe in detail that ancient and indestructible undecaying, unchangeable, eternal Puruṣa, that is *nirguṇa* (free from Prākritic qualities) that you have seen and realized.

4. Father! You have seen the Śakti (the Prime Energy) personified as the *saguṇa* energy, the Supreme Goddess, having hands and feet; but I cannot understand of what kind is that *nirguṇa-śakti* which cannot be seen and which is devoid of all *prākṛtik* qualities. O Lotus-born! Be good enough to describe to me the real nature of that Prakṛti and Puruṣa, and thus satisfy me.

5-6. O Lord of Creation! I practiced severe austerities in Svetadvīpa (the white island), so that I might realize and see the Nirguṇa Highest Self and the Nirguṇa Śakti, the Supreme Goddess; I saw there many other Mahātmās (high-class spiritual persons) who attained *siddhis* (supernatural powers) practice *tapasyā* with their passions and anger conquered. But I did not realize nor did I see anything about that Nirguṇa Highest Self. Father, I was not despaired; again and again I continued with my ascetic practices; but still I failed.

7. Father, you have been so successful as to see that beautiful Śakti with qualities; I have heard about Her from you, but how and of what sort is that invisible attributeless energy as well as that Nirguṇa Puruṣa. Please narrate and explain all these and satisfy my desires that always reign in my breast.'

8. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus asked by Nārāda, the Lord of creation, the grandsire of the *lokas*, smiled, and began to speak the truth in the following words:

9. 'O best of Munis! The form of the Nirguṇa Puruṣa (the Supreme Spirit beyond the prākritik qualities) cannot exist or be visible; for everything that comes within the range of sight is transitory. How can, then, that Eternal Spirit have form and how can He become visible?

10. O Nārada! The Nirguṇa Energy or Nirguṇa Puruṣa comes not easily within the range of knowledge; but both of them can be realized by the Munis in their consciousness in meditation.

11. Prakṛti and Puruṣa have no beginning nor end; they can be realized only through faith; those that have no faith can never realize them.

12. Nārada! The universal consciousness that is felt in all beings, know that as the Highest Self; the Energy that is universal and is seen always in all the beings—know that as the Highest Self.

13. O blessed one! That Puruṣa and Prakṛti pervade everywhere and exist in all things; in this Universe nothing can exist without the presence of both of them.

14. Both of them are the highest intelligent self, *nirguṇa* (free from all material qualities), without any tinge of impurity, and undecaying. The one form that is a combination of these two is always to be meditated in the heart.

15. What is *śakti* (energy) is the Highest Self; what is the Highest Self is the Highest Śakti. O Nārada! Nobody can ascertain the subtle difference between these two.

16. O Nārada! Merely the study of all the *śāstras* and the *Vedas* with their *aṅgas* without renunciation does not enable one to ascertain the difference between these two.

17. O Child! This whole universe, moving and non-moving, comes out of *ahaṅkāra* (egoism). How can one ascertain the above difference even if he tries for one hundred *kalpas*, unless one frees oneself from *ahaṅkāra?*

18. The *jīvas* are *saguṇa* (with qualities); how can the *saguṇas* see the Nirguṇa One with their physical eyes? Therefore O Intelligent one! try to see the Saguṇa Brahman only within your heart until you free yourself from the material qualities and thus be fit to realize the Nirguṇa Brahman.

19-20. O best of Munis! If the tongue (organ of taste) and eyes (organ of sight) be affected with jaundice, the pungent taste and the yellow color do not appear what it appeared before; so the hearts of *jīvas*, overpowered with material qualities, are quite unfit for realization of the Nirguṇa Brahman. O Nārada! That heart again has originated from *ahaṅkāra;* how can then that heart be free from *ahaṅkāra?*

21. Until one becomes able to cut asunder all connections with qualities, seeing that Nirguṇa Brahman is impossible. No sooner one is totally free

from *ahaṅkāra*, than the Nirguṇa Brahman is at once seen by him within his heart.'

22-24. Nārada said: 'O best of the Devas! *Ahaṅkāra* is threefold—*sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik;* describe in detail the differences between these three subdivisions, as well the real nature of the *guṇas*. Also describe to me that knowledge, knowing which will lead to my salvation. Also describe, in detail, the characteristics of the *guṇas*, in due order.'

25-26. Brahmā said: 'O Sinless one! The energy of *ahaṅkāra* is of three kinds: Jñāṇa-śakti, Kriyā-śakti, and Artha- or Dravya-śakti. The power by which knowledge is produced or obtained is the Sāttvik Ahaṅkāra; the power by which action or activity or motion is produced is the Rājasik Ahaṅkāra; and that by which the material things or objects of have senses are generated is called the Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra. O Nārada! thus I described to you, in due order, the threefold *ahaṅkāra*.

27-30. Now I describe to you their merits and workings in detail; hear. Out of the Dravya-śakti of the Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra come sound, touch, form, taste and smell. From these five qualities, the five *tanmātrās*, the five subtle-elements (primary atoms) are produced.

Sound is the quality of *ākāśa* (ether); touch is the quality of *vāyu* (Air); form is the quality of *agṇi* (fire); taste is the quality of *jala* (water); and smell is the quality of *bhūmī* (earth). O Nārada, these ten gross and subtle materials can, when combined, become endowed with power to work out results in the shape of earth, water, fire, etc.; and when the *Pañcīkaraṇa* process is combined, the building of the whole cosmos takes place as a natural consequence of the Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra, endowed with the energy of generating material substances.

31-34. Now hear what are produced by the Rājasik energy. The five organs of hearing, touch, taste, sight, and smell (ears, skin, tongue, eyes and nose) called the five *jñāṇendriyas* (organs of senses); mouth, hands, feet, anus and the organs of generation called the five *karmendriyas* (organs of action); and

Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Samāna, and Udāna are the five *vāyus*. The creation out of these fifteen substances is the Rājasik energy. Nārada! All these organs of senses and actions endowed with the Kriyā-śakti, called the *kāranas* and the materials fashioned out of them are called the *cidanuvṛtti* or Māyā.

35-38. O Nārada! From the Sāttvik Ahaṅkāra are produced the five presiding rulers of the five internal organs named *dik* (quarters), Vāyu, Sun, Varuṇa, the twin Aśvini Kumāras and the four presiding rulers of the four-fold divisions of *antaḥkarana* (*buddhi, manas, ahaṅkāra* and *citta*) named Moon, Brahmā, Rudra, and Ksetrajña. Thus the above five organs of senses, the five organs of action, the five Vāyus and mind, these sixteen substances are reckoned as the Sāttvik creation.

39-40. O Child! The Highest Self has two forms; one gross and the other subtle. The formless Self—Universal Consciousness incarnate, as it were—is the first form. The Seers consider this formless self to be the primary cause of all this phenomenal cosmos. This is only for the best qualified *jñāṇīs* (*uttama-adhikaris*), not for others.

The Second Form is the Gross Form for the meditation of the second-class qualified persons (*madhyama-adhikaris*); thus the sages say. This second form of the Supreme Goddess is conditioned by inherent Māyā (time, space and causation); this is also divided into gross and subtle, according as it is the outer or inner body of the second form, and the form suited for the meditation of the third-class (*kaniṣṭhā-adhikaris*) and second-class devotees).

41. My body is called Sūtrātmā; I will now tell you about the gross body of Brahman, the Highest Self. O Nārada! This my body and soul having the nature of a string or thread is called Hiraṅyagarbha; this is also the gross body of the Paramātman; therefore the Paramātman together with the Sūtrātmā should also be worshipped. O Nārada! I will now describe to you the outer gross body of Brahman, the Highest Self; hear it attentively; if one hears it with faith and devotion, one is sure to get salvation.

42-43. I have mentioned to you before the five subtle elements, called the five *tanmātrās;* now, when the *pañcīkarana* process is done, these are converted into the five gross elements. Now hear what the *pañcīkarana* process means:

44-46. Suppose you are to create the gross element of water. Divide into two equal parts the subtle element of water; divide also the other four gross elements into two equal parts respectively. Now set apart the first half of each of the five elements; divide the second half of each of the elements into four equal parts. Mix the first half of each of the elements with each of the fourth part of the other four elements; and you get one gross element. Similarly you get the other four gross elements.

For example: You want to get the gross element of water. With the half of the subtle element of water mix the fourth part of the halves of the other elements of ether, fire, air and earth; you get the gross element of water, and similarly the rest. When the five gross elements are thus produced, consciousness then enters into these elements as their presiding deities; next comes the feeling of egoism (I-ness) identifying itself with the body thus created out of the five elements: 'I am this body' and so forth.

47. This great 'I', the great consciousness, creating and considering the Cosmos as its body is called the Bhagavān, Ādideva, Nārāyaṇa or Vaiśvanara.

48. When, by the *pañcīkaraṇa* process the five gross elements—ether, air, fire, water and earth—are solidified and get their clear definite forms, one, two, three, four or five qualities are seen to exist in ether, air, fire, water, and earth, respectively.

49-51. Thus ether has one quality only; that is, sound. Air has got two qualities: sound and touch. Fire possesses three qualities: sound, touch and form. Water has got four qualities: sound, touch, form and taste. Earth has five qualities: sound, touch, form, taste and smell. So by the various

combinations of these five gross elements and their qualities, is produced this grand Cosmos, the great body of Brahman.

52. Similarly the sum-total of the *jīvās* is produced from the several parts of the whole *brahmāṇḍa;* these *jīvās* are eighty-four *lakhs;* so the sages say.

Thus ends the Seventh Chapter of the Third Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, on the creation and the Tattvas and their presiding Deities.

Note: Of these jīvās, those who are the best qualified, the *uttamādhikāris*, are known as the Brahmāṇas, *jānaghana-tūrīyas*, as denoted by *āūṁ hṛīṁ;* the middlings have their gross, subtle and causal bodies and are called as Brahmā Vaiśvānara, Sūtra, Hiraṅyagarbhas; and the third class is known as Viśva, Taijasa and Prājñas and forms the body, as it were, of the Brahmāṇa. There are others also, animals (*paśu*), etc., in the lowest class.

Chapter VIII—the Guṇas and their forms

1. Brahmā said: "O Nārada! I have described to you what you asked me just now about the creation of this universe, etc. Now hear with attention the colors of the three qualities, as well their configuration and how they are seen to exist.

2-3. The *sattva-guṇa* is the source of pleasure and happiness; and when happiness comes, everything seems delighting. When integrity, truthfulness, cleanliness, faith, forgiveness, fortitude, mercy, bashfulness, peace and contentment arise in one's heart, know certainly that there has arisen firmly the *sattva-guṇa* in that man.

4. The color of the *sattva-guṇa* is white; it makes one always like religion, have faith towards good purposes and discard one's tendencies towards bad objects.

5. The Ṛṣis, the seers of truth classify *śraddhā* (faith) under the three headings *sāttvik*, *rājasik* and *tāmasik*.

6. The quality *rājas* is of red color, wonderful and is not pleasant; it is the source of all troubles; there is no doubt about this.

7-8. The intelligent should understand that *rājas* has certainly arisen in him, when his mind is filled with hatred, enmity, quarrelsome feeling, pride, stupification, uneasiness, sleeplessness, want of faith, egoism, vanity and arrogance.

9-11. The quality *tamas* is of black color. From *tamas* arises laziness, ignorance, sleep, poverty, fear, quarrels, miserliness, insincerity, anger, aberration of intellect, violent atheism, and finding fault with others. The wise should think that *tamas* has overpowered him when the above qualities are found to possess him. When this *tamas* quality is attended with the Tāmasī faith, then it becomes the source of pain to others.

12. The well-wishers should manifest in themselves the *sāttvik* qualities, control the *rājasik* qualities, and destroy the *tāmasik* qualities.

13. These three qualities are always found to remain intermingled with another, and each of them has always an inherent tendency to overcome the others; and therefore they are always, as it were, at war with another. They never have a separate existence from one another.

14. Never is found anywhere only one *sattva* quality to the exclusion of others, the *rājas* and *tamas;* similar is the case with the *rājas* and *tamas*. They remain intermingled and depend on one another.

15. O Nārada! Now hear, in detail, which two qualities remain in twins, knowing which, one is freed from this ocean of the transmigration of existence.

16. I have realized these; therefore you ought not to have any uncertainties on these points. The reality of these is especially felt, when it is really understood and when its effects begin to manifest themselves.

17. O high-minded! No one is able to realize these at once; it requires to be heard and then meditated upon. It also depends on one's natural capability and merits due to the past actions.

18-21. Suppose one hears of the sacred places of pilgrimages and is filled with the *rājasik* devotion. He goes out to those places and sees what he had heard before. There he performs his ablutions, makes offerings and the *rājasik* gifts, stays there for some time; but all this he does under the influence of the *rājasik* quality. And when he returns home, he finds himself still not free from lust, anger, love and hatred; he remains the same that he was before. Therefore, in this case, O Nārada! man hears but he does not realize the purifying effects of those holy places. O best of Munis! And when he does not find any benefit from the holy place of pilgrimage, it is equivalent to his not at all hearing of the place.

22. O best of Munis! The effect of visiting the sacred places of pilgrimages is then said to accrue to any individual when he becomes freed from his sins, just as the fruit of cultivating fields is then said to occur when the cultivator gets the ripened harvest out of his labor and enjoys the produce of his fields.

23. O Nārada! Lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, thirst, hatred, love, vanity, malice, jealousy, unforgiveness and unrest all these indicate that there is sin; and until these are purged out of one's body and mind, man lives in sin. If visiting the sacred places of pilgrimages does not enable one to overcome the above passions, then the labors in going to those places are in vain; those labors alone are the results, just as the toil undergone by the cultivator is his only result, and is not met with any reward when there is no harvest at all.

24-28. Lo! The cultivator takes hard labor to clear his fields and cultivate the hard soil; he then sows the valuable seeds, because this is considered as doing good. Next, in expectation of the harvest, he undergoes a good deal of pains, day and night, to protect his fields; and goes down to sleep, in the cold season, in the forest surrounded by tigers and other dangerous animals; but alas! locusts come, eat away and destroy all the crops, to the utter disappointment of the cultivator. All his labors are spent in vain. So, O Nārada! The labor taken by one in going to the holy places yields pains, and pains only, instead of success and happiness.

29-32. When the *sattva* quality grows in abundance, as a consequence of reading the *Vedānta* and other *śāstras*, dispassion comes towards the *rājasik* and *tāmasik* qualities and things, and the *sattva* quality overpowers *rājas* and *tamas*. Similarly when the *rājasik* quality grows in abundance, as a natural consequence of greed and avarice, then it overpowers *sattva* and *tamas;* so, by delusion, when the *tāmasik* quality grows in abundance, it overpowers the *sāttvik* and the *rājasik* qualities. O Nārada! I will now speak to you, in detail, about the overpowering of these qualities by one another.

33-35. When the *sattva* quality grows in preponderance, the mind rests in religious ideas and things; it no more thinks of those external things, the products of the *rājas* and *tamas* qualities. Rather it wants to enjoy the *sāttvik* things; wealth, religious affairs and sacrifices that can be acquired or performed without any trouble. Then that individual yearns after salvation and renounces his pursuits after the *rājasik* and *tāmasik* objects.

36. Thus, O Nārada! first try to conquer the *rājas* and then the *tamas;* then the *sattva* becomes pure.

37. When the *rājasik* quality grows in preponderance, the individual imbibes the *rājasik* faith, abandons his own *sanātana-dharma* (settled eternal religion) and practices against his religious instructions.

38. Under the *rājasik* propensities, one is eager to amass wealth and enjoy the *rājasik* things. The *rājas* drives away the *sattva* and curbs the *tamas*.

39-41. Nārada! So when the *tāmasik* quality grows in preponderance, the faith in the *Vedas* and in the religious *śāstras* entirely disappears. Imbibing the *tāmasik* faith, the individual squanders away his wealth and is always engaged in quarrels, party feelings, envy, violence and never enjoys peace. The individual with the *tāmasik* quality in excess overpowers the *rājasik* and *sāttvik* qualities and becomes angry, wicked, and a great cheat, and does everything as he likes, without any regard to his superiors.

42. Nārada! Thus you see that, of these three qualities, no one can remain entirely alone, free from the other qualities. These remain always in twos or threes.

43-44. *Sattva* can never exist without *rājas; rājas* can never exist without *tamas;* these two qualities can never exist without *tamas*. Again *tamas* cannot exist without *rājas* and *sattva*. These qualities act and react always in twos or threes.

45-47. They never exist separately; they live in pairs or threes and are the originators of each other; these qualities are of the nature of procreating things; in other words, *sattva* originates the *rājas* or *tamas;* again the *rājas* originates sometimes *sattva* and *tamas*. Again the *tamas* sometimes originates *sattva* and *rājas*. Thus they generate each other as the earthen pots and earth are their mutual causes.

48-49. Devadatta, Viṣṇu Mitra, and Yajña Datta—these three united perform any action, so these three qualities united reside in the *buddhi* (intellect) of the *jīvas* and generate their sense perceptions. Just as the husband and wife get into a couple, the qualities get into couples.

50. *Sattva* with *rājas* forms the couple *rājas-sattva;* so *sattva-rājas* forms another couple where *sattva* predominates. In the same way, *sattva* and *rājas* form each with *tamas* the other couples.’

51. Nārada said: “O Dvaipāyana! Hearing thus about these three qualities from my father, I asked him again these questions.”

Thus ends the eighth chapter of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam containing the description of the Guṇas, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—characteristics of the Guṇas

1-2. Nārada said: "Father! You have described to me the characteristics of the three qualities; though I have drunk the sweet juice from your lotus like mouth, still I am not quite satisfied. Kindly describe to me, in detail, in due order, how I can recognize clearly the three qualities so that I can get the highest peace of mind."

3. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Creator of the world, Brahmā, originated from the Rajo Guṇa, asked by his high minded son Nārada, began to speak in the following terms."

4. 'O Nārada! I myself do not possess fully the complete knowledge of the three qualities; but, as far as I know, I am telling that to you.

5. The pure *sattva* quality is not found alone to exist anywhere; it manifests itself always in mixed condition, in combination with the other qualities.

6-9. As a beautiful woman, well decorated with ornaments and endowed with amorous gestures, gives delight to her husband, father, mother and friends, on the one hand; and on the other hand, becomes a source of pain and delusion to her rival wives, so the *sattva* quality, personified as a beautiful woman, engenders the *sāttvik* happiness of the mind to some individual at one time, and at another time becomes a source of pain to the same individual; or at one and the same time becomes a source of happiness to one and a source of pain to another. Thus the *rājas* or the *tamas* quality, personified respectively as a beautiful woman becomes a source of pain or delusion to an individual at one time, and at another time, a source of happiness to the same man. So it is easily seen that one quality cannot remain single; it remains in union with the other qualities.

At any subsequent time the *rājas* might get preponderance, and that man may be in circumstances requiring money or so forth; but, due to his *sattva* quality beforehand he did not collect money, and therefore he feels pain afterwards. So with the *rājas*. Or it may be thus: Suppose an earning member is *sāttvik*. He earns just sufficient to meet his wants. But his family members require more money, for they are *rājasik*. Therefore the earning member is happy for his *sāttvik* quality; but the other members are unhappy for his *sāttvik* quality. A man is, as it were, wedded to three wives: *sattva, rājas* and *tamas*.

10. O Nārada! When the three qualities remain each in their own real natures, then the effects produced by them also remain always the same; no changes are perceived owing to the difference of time or person. But when they get combined, then each of them produces effects sometimes counter to their natures.

11-13. A young beautiful woman, shy, modest and of sweet qualities, well versed in religious learning, and full of good behavior, skilled in love practices and full of sweet sentiments, becomes a source of loving delight to her beloved and also a source of pain to her rival wives—so each of the three qualities no doubt assume different aspects according to differences in time and in the nature of the person.

O Nārada! As one woman gives pain and delusion to her rival wives and gives pleasure to her husband friends, so the *sattva* quality, when perverted, gives pain and delusion to the persons.

14-19. As the police sepoys and constables are, on the one hand, delight to the saints, troubled by thieves, and, on the other hand, sources of pain and confusion to the thieves and robbers; again as the heavy shower of rain in a pitch-dark night, in the rainy season, when the sky over clouded, and when there are flashes of lightning and thunder, is on the one hand, a source of highest delight to a farmer, who has all seeds and necessary things and implements, and, on the other hand is a source of pain to the unfortunate householder, whose house is not yet completely thatched with grass or

who has not been able to collect his beams and grass for necessary roofing, and a source of utter bewildering confusion to the young woman, whose husband is abroad expected back at that time, so the three *guṇas* produce contrary results when perverted by contact with the remaining *guṇas*, instead what they would have produced, had they not been perverted so.

20-25. O Child! Again I speak to you of the characteristics of the the *guṇas*. The *sattva-guṇa* is pure, clear, illumining, light not heavy, and white. When the senses, eyes, etc., and the limbs are felt very light, and the heart and brain clear, when there is dispassion towards the *rājasik* and the *tāmasik* enjoyments, know then that the *sattva* quality has grown in preponderance in a body. When there is a tendency to yawn, when there is rigidity and suppression of the functions of faculties and when one feels drowsiness, consider that the *rājasik* quality has gone to excess. Again, when one seeks after quarrels and goes to another village, one is always restless and ready to fight, when one feels heaviness in body, as if wrapped by a very heavy darkness, when one's limbs and senses are heavy and obscure, when one's mind is vacant, and when one does not like to go to sleep, know that the *tamas* has increased too much, Nārada!'

26. Nārada said: 'O Father! You have described the different characteristics of the three Guṇas; but I cannot understand how they act all in conjunction.

27. As those who are enemies to one another do not work united, so these *guṇas*, of opposite characteristics, are enemies, as it were, to one another; then how can they act in unison? Kindly explain this to me.'

28-30. Brahmā said: 'O Nārada! The three *guṇas* may be likened to a lamp. As a lamp manifests a certain object, so these three qualities united do manifest or reveal a certain thing. See the wick, oil, and flame are all of different characteristics; though the oil goes against fire, still it unites with the fire. The oil, wick and fire though running against each other; all these united serve the one common purpose of illumining, revealing a certain object.

31. So, O Nārada! All the three qualities, though of contrary natures, go to prove the same thing.'

Nārada said: 'O Son of Satyavatī! The lotus-born Brahmā thus described the three qualities, as born of Prakṛti; and they are the causes of this Universe. What I heard of yore about the nature of Prakṛti, I have now described before you.'

32. Vyāsa said: "O King! What you asked me, I asked before the same to Nārada and he described thus to me, as I told you above, about the characteristics and the effects of the three *guṇas* in regular order and in detail.

33. O King! Wherever in the *śāstras* whatever is said, the essence of all that is this—that the Highest Energy, the Supreme Force, the Great Goddess who is pervading the Universe, is always with qualities or without qualities, according to the differences in the manifestation. This Supreme Force is to be worshipped with the highest devotion.

34. The Brahmān, the Puruṣa—the Supporter, the Ultimate Substratum, the Highest Energy—considered as the Male Principle. Though It is Undecaying, Supreme and Full, It is still without any desires or emotions. It is not able to accomplish any action without the help of its inherent force; this Mahā-māyā, the Supreme Force is doing all the functions, real and unreal, of the universe.

35-37. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, the Sun, Moon, Indra, the twin Aśvins, the Vasus, Viśvakarmā, Kuvera, Varuṇa, Fire, Air, Pūsā, the Sadānan, and Ganeṣa all can do their respective functions because they are united with Śakti; else they are unable even to move themselves. Therefore O king! Know that Supreme Goddess Mahā-māyā as the cause of this Universe.

38. O Lord of men! You worship this Goddess, perform sacrifices in honor of Her and worship Her with the highest devotion.

39. O king! That Mahā-māyā is Mahā-Lakṣmī, She is Mahā-Kālī, She is Mahā-Sarasvatī; She is the Goddess of all the *bhūtas* and She is the Cause of all causes.

40. That all-peaceful Goddess, easily worshipped and the ocean of mercy, when worshipped, fulfills all the desires of Her devotees; what to say, the mere utterance of Her name is sufficient for the granting of the desires.

41. In days of yore Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, all the Devas and many other self-controlled ascetics worshipped Her to attain liberation.

42. O king! What shall I speak now about Her more than this: If one takes Her name even with indistinctness, She grants the desired purposes, even if they are quite unattainable.

43. In the midst of forest, on the sight of tigers and other ferocious animals, if one becoming afraid, cries aloud Her seed *mantra* "Ai, Ai" incorrectly without the *bindu* instead of "Aiṁ, Aiṁ" even then She grants immediately his desires.

44-45. O best of kings! There is an example of Satyavrata on this point. That the mere utterance of the name of Bhagavatī gives unforeseen results, has been witnessed by us and other high-minded Munis. Also in the assembly of the Brahmāṇas I have heard fully many sages quoting in detail many instances on the above point.

46-47. O king! There was a Brahmāṇa named Satyavrata, quite illiterate, a thorough blockhead. Once he heard the letter "Ai, Ai" being uttered by a pig; and in course of a talk he himself uttered incidentally that letter and thereby became the one of the best Paṇḍitas.

Note: *Aiṁ* is the *bīja-mantra* of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of learning.

48. The Goddess Devī, the Ocean of mercy, hearing the letter "Ai" being pronounced by that Brahmāṇa, became very glad and made him the best of the poets.

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the 3rd Skandha on the characteristics of the Guṇas in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—the story of Satyavrata

1. Janamejaya said: "O Maharṣi! Who was Satyavrata, the Brahmāṇa whose name you have just taken? In what country was he born? Of what nature was he? Please describe all these to me and satisfy my curiosity?

2. How did he hear that sound 'Ai'; how did he repeat that word? How came out the success to him, that illiterate Brahmāṇa, at that very instant?

3. And how is it that that Great Goddess, who is omniscient and omnipresent, was pleased with him? Kindly describe this interesting incident in detail."

4. Sūta said: "Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, thus asked by the king, addressed him with the following pure, sweet, and highly liberal words.

5. Vyāsa said: 'Hear, O king! You are the best and foremost in the Kuru clan; what I heard before in the assembly of the Munis, I am now relating that ancient story, highly beneficial to you.

6. O best of the Kurus! Once in my peregrinations in the holy places of pilgrimages, I came to the Naimiṣāraṇya forest, that highly sacred place frequented by the Munis.

7-8. That time there were staying Sanaka, Sanātana and the other sons of Brahmā, who were liberated while living. I went there and bowed down to the Munis and took my seat. Then the religious conversations ensued there in the assembly, when the great sage Maharṣi Jamadagni began to question the Munis in the following terms:

9. “O high-minded excellent ascetics and Munis! There has arisen a great doubt in my mind; I am desirous to have that doubt solved in this assembly of the Maharṣis.

10-12. O all-knowing Maharṣis that have fulfilled your vows! O Givers of one’s honor! Now my question is this: Of the following Devas Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra, Varuṇa, Fire, Kuvera, Wind, Viśvakarmā, Kārtikeya, Gaṇeśa, the Sun, the two Aśvins, Bhaga, Pūsā, Moon, and the other planets, who is the first and best to be worshipped, who can easily be served; who is very quickly satisfied and grants the desired boons? kindly tell me this as early as possible.”

13. Thus questioned by the Muni Jamadagni, Maharṣi Lomaśa, one in the assembly, spoke: “O Jamadagni! Hear in reply to your question.

14-15. The Goddess of Energy (Śakti) is the best of the Devas, most excellent and highest to be worshipped. Those who want welfare, they ought to worship this Supreme Force. She is the Parā-Prakṛti, the Highest Nature, the Brahman conditioned by Māyā (time, space, and causation). She grants all desires, does good to all, pervades everywhere, and is the Mother of Brahmā and the other high-souled Devas. She is the First Prakṛti, and is the Root of this gigantic Tree of Universe.

16. If anyone calls the Devī in remembrance or distinctly utters Her Name, She fulfills all the desires of the human beings. If anybody worships Her, She is at once filled with mercy and becomes ready to grant boons.

17. O Munis! Hear how once on a time, a Brahmāṇa, uttering one letter of Her mystical *mantra*, obtained Her grace. I am now describing that most auspicious history before you. Be pleased to hear.

18. Once on a time, there lived in the country of Kosala* a famous Brahmāṇa, named Devadatta. He had no issues and therefore started duly according to the prescribed rules a sacrifice called Puttreṣṭi for the sake of obtaining children.

19-20. On the banks of the Tamasā river, the Brahmāṇa erected a temporary building (an open shade) for performing the ceremony, and there built an altar and invited the Brahmāṇas, versed in the *Vedas* and clever in performing sacrificial rites. There he placed the fire and began to perform according to the strict rules, the Puttreṣṭi sacrifice.

21-22. In that sacrifice Suhotra the best of the Munis acted the part of Brahmā (1); Yājñyavalkya acted the part of Adhvaryu (2); Bṛhaspati, that of Hotā (3); Paila, that of Prastotā (4); Govila, that of Udgātā (6); and the other Munis acted as assistants. These all were duly paid their remunerations.

23-24. The Hotā Govila, the excellent reciter of the *Sāma* hymns, began to sing in accented tones called *svarita* (the accents are three: Udātta, Anudātta and Svarita) and the *Rathantara Sāma* in 7 tunes.

Then he began to draw breath frequently; and consequently there was a break in time in the accent of Govila. Seeing this, Devadatta was angry and immediately said to Govila:

25. 'Well, Govila, you are the foremost of the Munis and still you are doing your work like a quite illiterate man. I fear obstacles may arise in the getting of my son in this my sacrifice of Puttreṣṭi.'

26. Govila then became much enraged and told Devadatta "Your son will be illiterate, hypocritical and dumb.

27. Behold! Every being is subject to breathing and respiring; it is very hard to control them; there is no fault of mine in the accents of my songs being thus broken; it is strange that you, being intelligent, cannot understand this."

28. Being afraid to hear the curse from Govila, Devadatta became very sorry and said "O Muni! I have done no serious offence; why are you so offended without any cause. See! The Munis are void of anger and they always give delight to others.

29-30. O best of Brahmāṇas! My offence is very trifling; why have you inflicted on me so severe a curse? I was already under the mental agony, since I had no issues; and now you have made me suffer move pain.

31. For the Vedic Paṇḍitas declare that it is better not to have any son than to have an illiterate stupid son; the more so, when a Brahmāṇa's son is illiterate, he is blamed by one and all.

32. An illiterate son is like a *śūdra* or a beast; he is unfit for any action. O Brahmāṇa! What shall I do with an illiterate son?

33. An illiterate Brahmāṇa is like a *śūdra*; consequently not an object to be engaged in any act of worship or of gifts, he is not deserving to do any action.

34. A Brahmāṇa, bereft of the knowledge of the *Vedas*, living in a country is treated as a *śūdra* by the king of the place and is liable to pay taxes.

35. Whoever wants to have any fruit in any action will never invite an illiterate Brahmāṇa to take his seat in the ceremony relating to the Pitṛs or the Devas.

36. The king will consider an illiterate Brahmāṇa as if a *śūdra* and will never engage him in any religious ceremony, but will order him to do the work of a farmer in cultivating fields.

37. Rather to perform the funeral ceremonies by erecting a Kuśabata than to engage an illiterate Brahmāṇa for the purpose.

38. One should give food to an illiterate Brahmāṇa just sufficient to fill his belly and no more. If he does not do that, the giver and especially the receiver are subject to go down to hell.

39. Fie to a kingdom where honor is shown to the illiterate stupid Brahmāṇas!

40. Where no difference is observed when seats, worship and gift are given to various persons, sages should draw their inference how the literate and illiterate persons are treated there.

41. When the illiterate fools become haughty, when they are paid honors and gifts, the literary persons should never dwell there.

42. The wealth of the wicked goes to the enjoyments of the bad persons; for the Nīm trees, though abounding richly in fruits, are enjoyed only by crows.

43. Again, on the other hand, if a Brahmāṇa, versed in the *Vedas*, studies the *Vedas* even after taking their food, still his father and forefathers are happy and play cheerfully in their heavens.

44. Therefore O Govīla! You being the foremost of the Brahmāṇa who are versed in the *Vedas*, what have you said just now? See in this world, death is rather to be preferred then to have an illiterate son. How is it, then, that you have cursed me that I would get an illiterate son, when you are the best one, highly qualified with knowledge?

45. O high minded one! You are capable to relieve the distressed; I am bowing down to your feet; show your mercy and reconsider your curse."

46. Lomaśa said: 'O Munis! Devadatta, saying these words, fell prostrate at his feet and began to eulogise him in very pitiful words, being very much grieved and with tears in his eyes.

47. Seeing him thus distressed, Govila was moved with pity. The persons that are noble have their anger satiated after a short while; the anger of the ignoble lasts for a long time.

48. The water is naturally cool; but it gets hot in contact with fire heat; and no sooner the heat is drawn away, water gets again cooled quickly.

49. The merciful Govila then addressed the distressed Devadatta “Your son, though at first illiterate, will afterwards be very learned.”

50. The Brahmāṇa Devadatta was very glad on getting this boon; then completing the sacrifice, rewarded the Brahmāṇas with their due *dakṣiṇas* and dismissed them.

51. In due course of time, his fair chaste wife Rohinī, like the asterism (*nakṣatra*) Rohinī became pregnant.

52. Devadatta performed the Garbhādhān and Pumsavan ceremonies and other purificatory rites duly.

53. He performed the Sīmantonnayana ceremony according to rules, considered his Puttraveṣṭi sacrifice successful, and made various offerings to the Brahmāṇas.

54-55. In the auspicious *lagna* when Rohinī asterism was present and on an auspicious day, his wife Rohinī gave birth to a male child. Devadatta performed the nativities of the newborn child and saw its face. Next that knower of the Purāṇas, Devadatta kept the name of the child as Utathya.

56. When the son was eight years old, Devadatta performed the Upanayana (thread) ceremony duly.

57-58. Next the child was made to accept the vow of Brahmācārya; and Devadatta made him study the *Vedas;* but the child could not pronounce a single word and used to sit simply like a stupid boy. Though tried in various ways to read and write, that wicked boy never paid the slightest attention, and simply sat idly. Seeing this, his father was very sorry and much grieved.

59. Thus twelve years passed. Yet the boy could not learn how to perform his *sandhyā-vandanā* duly.

60. The rumour went abroad that Utathya, the son of Devadatta turned out very illiterate. All the Brahmāṇas, ascetics, and other persons came to learn this fact.

61. Wherever Utathya used to go in any forest on hermitage, the people used to laugh at him, ridiculed his father and mother and began to chide that illiterate son.

62. Thus blamed by father, mother and all other persons, dispassion occupied the heart of Utathya.

63. Once when rebuked by his father and mother that it was better to have a blind and lame son instead of an illiterate brute, Utathya took recourse to renunciation and went to a dense forest.

64-65. On the banks of the Ganges in a beautiful spot free from obstacles, he built a beautiful hut and began to subsist on the roots and fruits of the forest and with collected mind. Having made the excellent vow "I will never speak untruth" and holding the vow of celibacy, he lived in that beautiful hermitage.

Thus ends the 10th chapter in the 3rd Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa relating to the story of Satyavrata.

Chapter XI—the merits of the Devī

1-5. Lomaśa said: "O Munis! Utatthya, the son of Devadatta, was quite ignorant of anything of the *Vedas*, *japam* (muttering of *mantra*), meditation of the deity, worship of the Devas, *āsana* (sitting posture), *prāṇāyāma* (withholding the breath by way of religious austerity), *pratyāhāra* (restraint of mind), *bhūta-śuddhi* (purification of the elements of the body by respiratory attraction and replacement), *mantra* (a mystical formula regarding some deity), *kīlaka* (chanting a *mantra* to serve as a pin of protection), Gāyatrī (the famous *mantra* of the Brahmāṇas), *saucam*

(cleanliness, external and internal), rules how to bathe, *ācamana* (sipping of water and reciting *mantrams* before worship), *prāṇāgnihotra* (offering of oblations to the fire of *prāṇa* or to the fire of life), the offering of a sacrifice, hospitality, *sandhyā* (the morning, midday and evening prayer), collecting fuels for oblations, and offering of oblations. Daily he rose in the morning and somehow rinsed his mouth, washed his teeth and bathed in the Ganges river without any *mantrams* (like a *śūdra*).

6. That stupid fellow ate indiscriminately, did not know what to eat and what not to eat. During the midday he collected the fruits from the forest and used to eat them.

7. But he always spoke truth while he stayed there; never did he say any untruth. The people of that place, seeing this, named him Satyavrata.

8-9. That Utatthya did no good or bad to anybody; he slept peacefully and blissfully; but be used to think that when he would die, his troubles would be ended; he felt that the life of an illiterate Brahmāṇa is a curse; his death would be a better alternative.

10. He used to think thus: 'Fate has made me a fool; I do not find any other cause for it. Oh! I got the exceedingly good birth amongst men; but all this has been rendered in vain by Fate.

11. Oh! As a fair woman, if barren, a cow if giving no milk, and a tree without any fruits are all useless, so Fate has rendered my life, too, quite useless.

12. Why am I cursing Fate? This is all the fruits of my past *karma*. In my previous life I never copied a holy book and presented it to a good Brahmāṇa; hence I am illiterate in this birth.

13. In my former birth I did not impart any knowledge to my favorite pupils; hence I am wicked and a cursed Brahmāṇa in this birth.

14. I never performed any religious asceticism in any holy place, I did not serve the saints, I never worshipped the Brahmāṇas with any offerings. For all these reasons I am now born of perverted intellect.

15. Many a son of the Munis have learnt the meanings of the *Vedas* and the *śāstras;* and I am whiling away my time thus in a quite illiterate condition by some wretched combinations of incidents.

16. I do not know how to perform *tapasyā;* what is the use, then, of my attempting to do so? I am of very bad luck, and thus my good resolve will not be crowned with success.

17. I consider Fate to be the strongest of all; Fie on one's own prowess! For actions done with effort and hard labor are frustrated entirely by Fate.

18. Time can never be overstepped; See! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra, and others are all under the influence of the Great Time.'

19. O Ṛṣis! Thus arguing in his mind, that Brahmāṇa son Utatthya stayed there in that hermitage on the bank of the holy Ganges.

20. And gradually he became thoroughly unattached to all the things and, being peaceful, passed away his time in that forest without any habitations and men, with great difficulty.

21. Thus passed away fourteen years in that forest where the Ganges was flowing. Still he did not learn how to worship the Supreme Deity, how to make *japam*, nor did he learn any *mantrams*. Simply he lived there and whiled away his time.

22. People surrounding that place knew this much only of—that this Muni spoke truth only, and hence his name was Satyavrata. This one name made him celebrated, that he is Satyavrata; never did he say any untruth.

23. Once on a time, a hunter named Nisāda, exceedingly clever in hunting, came accidentally with bows and arms in his hands, while hunting a deer

in that wide forest. He looked like a second God of Death (Yama) and seemed to be very cruel.

24. That savage mountaineer, drawing his bow so as to touch the ear, pierced a boar with his sharp arrows. The boar, being very much terrified, fled with enormous rapidity to the Muni Satyavrata.

25. On seeing the distressed condition of the boar trembling with fear and his body besmeared with blood, the Muni was moved with mercy.

26. While the boar, pierced with arrows and besmeared with blood, was running away in front of him, mercy took possession of the Muni, therefore the Muni began to tremble and agreeably to the human nature exclaimed "Ai, Ai" (go to that direction), the seed-*mantram* (*bīja*) of the Goddess of learning with ṁ left out (Aiṁ, Aiṁ).

27. That illiterate Brahmāṇa son never heard before that *ai* was the seed-*mantram* of the Sarasvatī Devī; nor did he come to know of it by any other means. Accidentally it came out of his mouth, and he uttered. And afterwards that Mahātmā, seeing the boar's distressed condition was merged in deep sorrow.

28. The boar entered trembling into the Muni's hermitage, very much distracted and being very much pained with arrows. Being unable to find any other way, the boar hid himself in the dense bushes.

29. Instantly there appeared then, before the Muni, the terrible savage hunter, like a second God of Death, with string stretched to his ear, in pursuit of that boar.

30-33. On seeing the Muni Satyavrata sitting there alone and silent on the Kuśa grass seat, the hunter bowed down to him and asked "O Brahmāṇa! Whither has that boar gone? I know very well everything about you: that you never speak untruth. Therefore I am enquiring about the boar pierced by my arrows. My family members are all very hungry; and to feed them, I

am come out in this hunting. This is my living, ordained by the Fate; I have got no other means of maintaining the livelihood of my family. This I speak truly to you; whether it is bad or good, I will have to maintain my family with it. O Brahmāṇa! You are famous as Satyavrata; my family members are starving; kindly reply quickly where that boar has gone!"

34. Thus asked by the hunter, the Mahātmā Satyavrata was merged in an ocean of doubt; he began to argue 'If I say I have not seen the boar then my vow to speak the truth will certainly be broken.

35. The boar struck with arrows has gone this way, it is true. How can I tell a lie? Again, this man is hungry and is therefore asking, he will instantly kill the boar no sooner than he finds him. How then can I speak truth?

36. Where speaking out the truth causes injury and the loss of lives, that truth is no truth at all; moreover even untruth, when tempered with mercy for the welfare of others, is recognized as truth. Really speaking, whatever leads to the welfare of all the beings in this world, that is truth; and everything else is not truth.

37. Thus placed between the horns of a religious dilemma, what shall I do now so as to meet both the ends—to save the life of the boar, to do the welfare, as well as not to speak untruth."

38. O Jamadagni! When Satyavrata saw the boar wounded by the arrow of the hunter, he, moved with pity, uttered the seed-*mantra* of the Goddess of Learning; and now that most auspicious Goddess, on account of his uttering Her seed-*mantram*, was very pleased and gave him the knowledge, difficult to be attained otherwise.

39. The door of all his knowledge opened out at once, and he became at once instantly a seer, a poet like the ancient Muni Vālmikī.

40. Then that religiously disposed, merciful Brahmāṇa, aiming at Truth, addressed that hunter before him with bows in his arms, thus:

41. “That force which sees (as witness) never speaks; and that force which speaks, never sees. O hunter! Why are you asking me repeatedly, impelled by your own selfish desire?”

42. The hunter, the killer of the animals, on hearing this was disappointed in the matter of finding out the boar and went back to his home.

43. That Brahmāṇa turned out a poet like Varuṇa, and he became celebrated as Satyavrata, the speaker of truth, in all the worlds.

44. He began to recite the Satyavrata *mantram* duly, and, by its influence, became a Paṇḍita, rivalled by none in this world.

45. During every festival the Brahmāṇas chanted his praise, and the Munis used to narrate his story in detail.

46. On hearing his fame spreading all around, his father Devadatta who forsook him before, recalled him to his hermitage and took him again in his family with great honor and affection.

47. Therefore O King! You should always worship and serve that Great Goddess, the Prime Energy, the Cause of all this Universe.

48. O King! With due Vedic rites you perform that sacrifice to that Goddess which will surely yield results at all times and all desires. I already spoke to you about this.

49. That Great Goddess is known as Kāmadā (the giver of all desires); for She grants all desires when men with devotion remember Her, worship Her, take Her name, meditate Her and eulogise Her.

50-56. O King! The wise sages ought to see the persons diseased, distressed, hungry, those without any wealth, the hypocrite, the cheat, the afflicted, the sensual, the covetous, the incapable, always suffering from mental troubles; again those who are wealthy with their children and grandchildren, prosperous, healthy, with enjoyments, versed in the *Vedas*, literary, kings,

heroes, those who command over many, those attended with relations and kinsmen and endowed with all good qualities; and then judge for themselves that those people did not worship the Goddess and therefore they were sufferers and these people worshipped the Goddess and hence they were happy in this world.'

57. Vyāsa said: "Thus I heard from the mouth of Lomaśa Muni, in assembly of the sages, the good merits of the Great Goddess.

58. O King! Consider all these and you will find that the Highest Goddess, the Bhāgavatī is to be worshipped always with devotion and unselfish love."

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter on the merits of the Devī in the story of Satyavrata in the Third Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—the Ambā Yajña rules

1. The king spoke: "O Lord! Kindly describe the rules and regulations as to how the Devī Yajña (sacrifice) is performed with its duly prescribed rites and ceremonies. Hearing it I will unwearied perform it, as far as it lies in my power, with as little delay as possible.

2. How the worship is done, what are the *mantras*, what are the articles required for oblations, how many Brahmāṇas are required and what *dakṣiṇas* are to be paid to them, describe in detail all these."

3-5. Vyāsa said: "O king! I am telling you duly how the Yajña is performed, hear. The actions are always threefold according as the preparations are made and according as they are practiced with regard to the observed rules. The threefold divisions are *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. The Munis do the *sāttvik pūjā*, the kings celebrate *rājasik* and the Rākśasas do the *tāmasik*

pūjās. There is another *pūjā* which is devoid of qualities and which is performed by the liberated ones. I will describe to you all these in detail.

6-7. O king! The Yajña is then called *sāttvik* when it is performed in a Sāttvik place, like Benares, etc., in *sāttvik* time, e.g., in Uttarāyana, when the materials collected are earned rightly, when the *mantras* are those of the *Vedas*, when the Brahmāṇa is *śrotriya*, where there is *sāttvik* faith, devoid of any attachment towards the sensual objects, and when all these happen to coincide. O king! When all the above takes place and there is purification of materials, actions, and *mantras*, i.e., when the materials are all right, when the actions are done as they ought to be, and where there is no error or omission, etc., in the *mantras*, etc., then and then only the Yajña becomes perfect and no doubt yields full results; there would be nothing contrary to this.

8-9. If the Yajña is performed with articles not rightly earned, then there is no fame either in this world nor there is any reward in the next world. Therefore it is necessary that the Yajña should be performed with rightly earned materials; then there is fame in this world and better state in the next world; and happiness is also acquired; there is no doubt about this.

10. O king! It is before your eyes, as it were, that the Pāṇḍavas performed the Rājasūya Yajña, the king of sacrifices, and, on the completion whereof, the excellent *dakṣiṇas* were paid to the Brahmāṇas and others.

11. In that Yajña the highly intelligent Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Lord of the Yādavas was present, as well as many other Brahmāṇas, like Bhāradvāja and other fully enightened souls.

12. But within three months after completing the sacrifice, the Pāṇḍavas suffered extreme hardships and had to live, with extreme difficulty, as exiles in the forest.

13. Consider the insult shown towards Draupadī, the Pāndava's defeat in the play of gambling, their going away to dwell in the forest; these

hardships were borne by the Pāṇḍavas. What rewards did then the Pāṇḍavas derive from the Rājasūya Yajña?

14-15. All the high-souled Pāṇḍavas had to work as slaves of Virāta; and Draupadī, the best of women, was very much troubled and insulted by Kichaka. When all these occurred, anyone can easily ask where were the *ashirvādas* of the pure-souled Brahmāṇas? Also what result did they derive from their unflinching devotion towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa when they were involved in the above critical state?

16. No one protected Draupadī, the chaste and the best, the daughter of Drupada, when she was drawn by her hair on her head into the hall of assembly where gambling was being played.

17. O king! How could all these happen in a place where Śrī Bhagavān Keṣava Himself and the high-souled Yudhiṣṭīra were present? If one argues, one would conclude 'there must have been something wrong in that Yajña.'

18. If you say that nothing wrong happened in the Yajña, all these were caused by Fate; then it comes to this: that the Vedic *mantras, āgamas* and the other Vedic rites are all fruitless.

19. If it be argued that though the Vedic *mantras* are powerful enough to bear fruits, yet whatever is predestined to come to pass will surely pass, then the proposition resolves into this: that all the means, expedients, and appliances lead to meaningless conclusions.

20. Then the *āgamas*, the *Vedas* merely recommend a *vidhi* or precept by stating the good arising from its proper observance and the evils arising from its omission, and also by adducing historical instances as its support; in other words, they are powerless as far as bearing fruits is concerned; all the acts are meaningless, asceticism to attain Heaven becomes useless and the peculiar duties of caste are fruitless. O king! This view is exceedingly culpable; it is never fit for acceptance by the high-souled persons.

21. O King! If what is laid by God in the womb of futurity (a state of things preordained by God in which it is sure to take place in the fullness of time), be taken as the first-hand proof, then all the other proofs are rendered null and void. Therefore Fate and human exertion both are to be undoubtedly taken into account to ensure success.

22. Human exertions being applied, if the results come otherwise, the wise Paṇḍitas would infer that some defects, omissions or imperfections crept into the work.

23. All the Paṇḍitas, very learned and instituters of sacrifices have classed *karmas* under different headings according as the agents, *mantras*, and articles employed in the worship vary.

24. Once on an occasion Viśvarūpa, ordained as a *guru* by Indra in a Yajña, intentionally did things contrary so as to benefit the Daityas, who belonged to his mother's side.

25. Viśvarūpa uttered repeatedly the *mantrams* beneficial to the gods, while they were present; and, during their absence, prayed heartily for the welfare of the Daityas; and, in the long run, protected the Daityas.

26. On seeing the Asuras gaining strength, Indra, the Lord of the Devas, became very much enraged and instantly cut off Viśvarūpa's head by his thunderbolt.

27. O King! This is then the instance where the contrary fruits were borne out by the agent employed in performing the Yajña; there is no doubt about this. This is not possible in the other cases.

28. See, again, the king of Pānchāla performed his sacrifice to get a son to kill Droṇa, the son of Bhāradvāja; and though he did this out of angry motives, still Dhriṣṭadyumna was born out of fire; and Draupadī sprang out of the altar.

29. Again, in days of yore, Daśaratha, the king of Kosala, was sonless; and he instituted a sacrifice to get one son; and lo! be got four sons.

30. Therefore O King! If the Yajña be performed according to proper rules and regulations, it yields fruits in all respects; again if it be done unrighteously, without any regard for the rules, etc., it yields results just the contrary; there is no doubt about this.

31-32. Therefore, there must have been some defects in the Yajña of the Pāṇḍavas; hence contrary effects ensued, and therefore the truthful king Yudhiṣṭhīra and his powerful brothers and the chaste Draupadī were all defeated in the play at dice.

33. It might be that the materials were not of a good stamp; they were all earned by killing the kings, good many in number, and earned thus unrighteously; or it might happen that the Pāṇḍavas did their Yajña with too much egoism. However, this is certain that there had crept in some defects in their actions.

34. O King! The *sāttvik* Yajña is rare; it can be done only by the *sāttvik* Munis who live in the 3rd order of the household life or who live as hermits.

35-36. The ascetics that eat daily the *sāttvik* food, the roots and fruits, collected from forests and obtained rightly, that is good to the Munis and that is well cleaned and purified, are the only ones that can perform with full devotions the *sāttvik* Yajñas, where no animals are sacrificed (where there are no sacrificial posts to which the victim is fastened at the time of immolation) and where offerings of cakes of ground rice in vessels are given. These are the best of all the *sāttvik* Yajñas.

37. The Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas perform the Yajñas with *abhimān* (self-conceit and egoism) where many presents are given, animals are sacrificed, and all things are well cleansed, purified and elaborately decorated. This Yajña is called *rājasik*.

38. That Yajña is according to the sages *tāmasik*, where the Dānavas, puffed up with arrogance, infatuated with anger, jealousy and wickedness perform their acts with the sole object of killing their enemies.

39. That Yajña is called *mānas-yāg* or *mānasik* (mental) where the high-souled Munis, void of worldly desires, collect mentally all the necessary articles and perform the Yajña with the sole object of liberation from the bondages of the world.

40. In all the other Yajñas (than the *mānas-yāg*) some imperfections naturally arise due to some defects in the materials, or want of faith, or in the performance or in the Brahmāṇas.

41. No other Yajñas can be so complete as the Mānasik Yajña; the reason being that in the other Yajñas some imperfections come out due to time, place, and separate ingredients to be collected.

42-43. Now hear who are the persons fit to undertake this mental Yajña in honor of the Great Goddess. First this mind is to be purified, by making it void of the *guṇas;* the mind being pure, the body becomes also pure, there is no doubt. When the mind becomes completely pure, after it has abandoned all sensual objects fit for enjoyment, then that man is entitled to perform the Mother's Yajña.

44-45. There he should build mentally the big hall for sacrifice, many *yojanas* wide, decorated with high polished pillars out of the materials brought for the purpose (e. g., fortitude, etc.). Within the hall he will imagine a wide and spacious altar and place the Holy Fire on it mentally according to due rules and regulations.

46-47. He is to select mentally the Brahmāṇa priests and consecrate them as Brahmā, Adharyu, Hotā, Prastotā, Udgātā, Pratihatrā and other assistants. He is to worship mentally all these priests.

48. Then he will have to imagine the five Vāyus—Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Samāna, and Udāna—as the five fires and locate them duly on the altar.

49-50. Prāṇa Vāyu stands for *gārhapatya;* Apāna, for *āhavanīya;* Vyāna for *dakṣiṇa;* Samāna for *avasathya;* and Udāna for *sabhya-agṇi*. These fires are all very terrible; then one should place these carefully on the altar with great concentration of mind. He is to collect then all the other necessary materials and think that all are very pure and free from any defects.

51-57. In the Mānasik Yajña, mind is the offerer of oblations and mind the Yajamāna, the performer of the Sacrifice; and the Presiding Deity of the Sacrifice is the Nirguṇa Brahman. The Great Goddess, the Nirguṇa Energy, who is always auspicious and gives the feeling of dispassion and indifference to worldly objects, is the awarder of fruits in this Yajña. She is the *brahma-vidyā*, She is the substratum of all, and She is all-pervading. The Brahmāṇa is to take the Devī's name and offer oblations in the fire of Prāṇa, the necessary articles for the Devī's satisfaction. Then he is to make his *citta* and *prāṇa* void of any worldly thought or any worldly support, and offer oblations to the Eternal Brahman through the mouth of Kuṇḍalinī (the Serpent Fire.)

Next, within his Nirvikalpa mind, by means of *samādhi*, he should meditate on the Self, the Maheśvarī Herself by his consciousness. Thus, when he will see his own self in all the beings and all the beings in his own self, then the *jīva* will get the vision of the Goddess Mahāvidyā, giving auspicious liberation (*mokṣa*). O King! After the high-souled Muni has seen the Goddess of everlasting intelligence and bliss, then he becomes the knower of Brahman. All the Māyā, the cause of this Universe becomes burnt up; only as long as the body remains, the *prārabdha-karma* remains.

58. Then the *jīvas* become liberated while living; and when the body dissolves, he attains to final liberation. Therefore, O Child! Whoever worships the Mother becomes crowned with success; there is no doubt about this.

59. Therefore follow the advice of the *guru*, the Spiritual Teacher; and with all attention, hear, think and meditate on the Great Goddess of the World.

60. O King! Liberation is sure to ensue of this Mānasa Yajña. All the other Yajñas are *sakāma* (with some object in view) and therefore their effects are temporary.

61-62. He who wants enjoyments in Heaven, should perform the Agṇistoma Yajña, with due rites and ceremonies; such is the Vedic injunction. But when the acquired merit expires, the sacrificer will have to come again into this world of mortals. Therefore the Mānasa Yajña is eternal and best.

63-65. This Mānasa Yajña is not fit to be performed by kings intent on getting victory. The Yajña that you performed, the serpent Yajña, is *tāmasik*, for you wanted to take vengeance on your enemy, the serpent Takṣaka; and millions of serpents were made to be burnt in that sacrifice.

O King! Hear now about the Devī Yajña that was performed by Viṣṇu in the beginning of the creation. You better now do that Devī Yajña with due rules.

66-67. I will tell you all about the rules; there are Brahmāṇas that know the rules and know best also the *Vedas;* they know also the seed *mantrams* (*bījas*) of the Devī, as well as the rules of their application; they are clever in all the *mantrams*. These will be your priests and you yourself will be the sacrificer.

68. O King! Do this sacrifice duly and deliver your father from hell by the merits that you will acquire thereby.

69. O Sinless One! The sin incurred on account of insulting a Brahmāṇa is serious and leads the sinner to hell. Your father committed that sin and incurred the curse from a Brahmāṇa. Therefore he has gone to hell.

70. Your father died also out of a snakebite which is not a meritorious death. The death occurred also in a palace built high up in the air (on a pillar), instead of taking place on the ground on a bed of Kuśa grass.

71. O best of the Kurus! The death did not occur in any battle nor on the banks of the Ganges. Void of proper bathing and charities, etc., he died in a palace.

72. O best of Kings! All the ugly causes, leading to hell, were present in the case of your father. See, again, there is also one thing which done will lead to one's liberation; but that was absent too with your father.

73-76. That is this: Let a man remain, wherever he may, whenever he comes to learn that his end is approaching, even if he had not practiced before any good practices or meritorious deeds, and even if he becomes senseless in the trial time of death, when dispassion comes to an individual whose mind gets, for the time being, clear and free from any worldly thoughts, then he should think thus: "This my body, composed of five elements, will soon be destroyed; there is no cause whatsoever in having any remorse for it; let whatever come, that it may; I am free, void of qualities; and I am the Eternal Puruṣa; death is not capable to do any harm to me. All the elements are liable to decay and destruction; what remorse can overtake me? I am not a man of the world, I am always free, Eternal Brahman; I have got no connection with this body that is merely the outcome of actions.

77. Before I did meritorious or unmeritorious acts, leading to happiness and pain; therefore I have got this mortal coil and am enjoying the fruits of my past auspicious or inauspicious Karma."

78. Whoever thinks thus and dies, even if he does not take proper purificatory bath or make any charity, he gets himself freed from the awful *saṁsāra* and never comes to see himself again born in this world.

79. O King! This method of parting from one's body is rarely attained even by the *yogīns;* this is the acme, the highest height of all the human efforts towards liberation.

80. But your father, hearing even the curse from a Brahmāṇa, retained his attachment towards his body; therefore he did not attain dispassion.

81. He thought thus: "My body is now free from any disease; my kingdom is free from enemies or any other source of danger; how can I now get myself saved from this untimely death?" Thinking thus, he ordered to call the Brahmāṇas who know the *mantrams*.

82. Then that king ascended to the palace, with medicines, many *mantras* and many other instruments.

83-84. He considered his fate to be the strongest and therefore did not take his bath in any holy place; he did not perform any charities, did not sleep on the ground or remember any *mantram* of the Devī. Due to Kali entering into his body, he committed the sin of insulting an ascetic, plunged himself in the ocean of delusion, and died bitten by the Takṣaka snake on the top of a palace.

85. The King has now fallen undoubtedly to hell on account of those vicious deeds. Therefore, O King! dost Thou deliver your father from the sin."

86. Sūta said, "O Ṛṣis! Hearing these words from the fiery Vyāsa, the king Janamejaya became very sad and tears came from his eyes and flowed down his cheeks and throat. He then exclaimed in a suffocating voice "Fie on me! my father is still in the hell. I will now do at once whatever leads my father to heaven."

Thus ends the twelfth chapter on the Ambā Yajña rules in the 3rd Adhyāya of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses composed by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—the Devī Yajña by Śrī Viṣṇu

1-3. The King said: "O Grandfather! How did Viṣṇu, the Powerful, the Cause of the world, perform the Devī Yajña? Whose help did he receive, and what priests with their knowledge of the *Vedas* did he engage? Kindly tell all these special details to me. I will very attentively hear first this Devī Yajña, performed by Viṣṇu; and then I will make arrangements to do that myself accordingly."

4. Vyāsa said: "O noble one! Hear in detail that very wonderful topic, how Viṣṇu celebrated the Devī Yajña comformably to the rules laid down in the *śāstras*.

5. When Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa were each given powers by the Devī, the Goddess of the Universe, and when they parted, these three Devas became free from their womanhood while they were coming back in their aerial car and turned out men, as they were before.

6. These three Devas found the great ocean before them. They brought out the world from it; and built dwelling abodes in that world; and they themselves began to live in some of them.

7. That world became fixed, steady and the supporter of all beings when the Goddess imparted the power of fixture, steadiness, and the power of supporting to the world. The earth, filled with marrow, then, became fixed and the great supporter by Her power.

8-10. O King! The name of this earth is Medinī, since it was made out of the marrow of the *asuras* Madhu and Kaitabha. This earth is termed Dharā because it supports all; is termed Prithvī because it is very capacious; and it is called Mahī because it is great, since it supports so many beings. O King! the Ananta serpent is holding it on her thousand hoods. To make the earth remain solid and compact, Brahmā built mountains at places. As iron nails in a log of wood, so these hills and mountains within this earth made it

fixed. Therefore the Paṇḍitas call these mountains Mahīdhara, holders of the earth.

11. O King! Thus the golden Meru, the great mountain, many *yojanas* wide, adorned with many golden mountain peaks was created.

12. Next Marīci, Nārada, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Dakṣa and Vasiṣṭha were created by Brahmā; these are the Brahmā's mental sons, created by sheer power of mind.

13. The son Kaśyapa was born to Marīci and thirteen daughters were born of Dakṣa. From these daughters and out of the seed of Kaśyapa, various Devas and Daityas were born.

14. Then human beings, animals, serpents and many other classes were created. This is called the Kāsyapī Śrīṣṭi or the Kaśyapa's creation.

15. Next Svāyambhava Manu sprang from the lower half of Brahmā; and the daughter named Śatarūpā came out of the left hand side of the Brahmā's body.

16. The two sons Priyavrata and Uttānapāda were born of Manu in the womb of Śatarūpā and the three daughters, very beautiful and fair complexioned, were also born of him.

17. Creating then, Bhagavān, the lotus-born Brahmā, built the beautiful Brahma-loka, on the top of the Meru mountain.

18. Then the Bhagavān Viṣṇu built the Vaikuṇṭha city on the top of all the *lokas* or worlds to dwell with his consort Lakṣmī.

19. Mahādeva, too, built the exceedingly beautiful Kailāśa and stayed there with his Bhūtas and played with them at his will.

20. The third *loka* termed Heaven was built on the top of Meru, decorated with various precious gems and jewels and stones. It was fixed as the abode of Indra.

21-22. When the great ocean was churned, Pārijāta, the best of all the trees, the elephant Airāvata with four tusks, the Heavenly cow yielding the milk of all desires, the Uccaiśravā horse and Apsarās, Rambhā and others, arose and were taken by Indra. These became the ornaments of Heaven.

23. The Moon and Dhanvantarī, the great phyisician also came out of the churning of the ocean. These surrounded with many other members began to shine, being situated above the Heavens.

24. O King! Thus the three varieties—human beings, Devas, and Tiryakas (birds, etc.)—and their many subvarieties sprang up.

25. The four classes of *jīvas—andaja* (born from eggs), *svedaja* (born out of sweats), *udbhija* (plants, etc.) and *jarāyujā* (men, etc.)—were created, being endowed with the fruits of their past auspicious or inauspicious *karmas*, as the case may be.

26. After finishing all their creations Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa began to play and walk about at their leisures in their respective spheres.

27. Thus the wheel of creation being started, the Great God Bhagavān Viṣṇu Acyuta remained in sport with Mahā-Lakṣmī in His own sphere, Vaikuṇṭha.

28. Then Bhagavān Viṣṇu, while sitting one day in Vaikuṇṭha, got in his mind the memory of that beautiful island, called Maṇidvīpa, adorned with precious stones, gems and jewels.

29-33. O King! In this Maṇidvīpa, the Bhagavān Viṣṇu got the vision of Mahā-Māyā and the auspicious *mantra*. He now thought to celebrate a Yajña in honor of the Devī, when he recollected the highest *śakti*, the Great Goddess. He then went out of his abode and invited Brahmā, Maheśvara,

Kuvera, Indra, Varuṇa, Fire, Yama, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Dakṣa, Vāmadeva, Bṛhaspati and others and began to collect lots of materials necessary for the Devī sacrifice. Selecting a *sāttvik* site, beautiful, and possessing great spiritual powers, Viṣṇu erected, with the help of the great artists and engineers, a wide capacious sacrificial hall, and for the due celebration and fulfilment of it, appointed twenty-seven priests who pledged a solemn vow to complete it duly.

34. When the big altar and *citi* (pile of wood for burning, stack of sacrificial bricks) were finished, the Brahmāṇas began to recite slowly the Devī *mantrams* with their root-*mantras* (*bījas*).

35-37. Then the profuse quantities of ghee were offered as oblations to to the Sacred Fire. Thus when the *homa* ceremony (offering oblations of ghee to the fire) was finished elaborately, conforming to the rules of the *śāstras*, a sweet and melodious Heavenly voice was heard in the air, addressing Viṣṇu Bhagavān, thus: 'O Viṣṇu! Let You be the supreme amongst the gods; honor and worship shall be Thine first; and you would be the most powerful of the Devas. Indra together with Brahmā, and the other Devas, all will worship You.

38-39. O Acyuta! (Infallible One) Those men on the earth that will be devoted to You, will certainly be endowed with power (*śakti*), and You shall be the bestower of boons and all their desires. O Viṣṇu! You will be the Supreme of the Devas and you will be the God of the gods; you will be the first and foremost in all the sacrifices, and You will be worshipped by the sacrificers.

40-41. People will worship you; and You will favor them with boons. O best of the Puruṣas! When the Devas will be troubled by the Asuras, they will come and take refuge in Thee. You will be the Protector of all, there is no doubt about this. In all the *Purāṇas* and all the vast *Vedas*, You will be first worshipped.

42. O Keśava! Wherever there will be decay and decline in religion, You will incarnate in your parts and to preserve religion.

43-44. O Mādhava! Your *avatāras*, renowned in all the worlds, will come down on earth as Your part incarnations in all sorts of wombs, in due order, and will be respected by all the high-souled personages. O Madhusūdana! Those *avatāras* will be the best of all the *avatāras,* and will be famous all the *lokas*, the worlds.

45. In all your *avatāras*, You will get your attendants, the *śaktis* (females) drawing their energies from My parts; and they will serve your purposes.

46-47. Vārāhī, Nārasimhī, etc., and various other *śaktis* of auspicious appearance, endowed with various weapons and decked with all ornaments, will serve as Your attendants; no doubt about this. O Viṣṇu! Always with their help and under the influence of My favor, you will no doubt be quite competent to serve the purposes of the Devas.

48. You should respect and worship all those *śaktis* by all means and with very great attention; never show the slightest trace of pride to them; never do You thus insult them.

49. These *śaktis*, capable of bestowing all desires, will be worshipped in *pratimās* (images of clay, etc.) in the whole of India.

50. O Deva of the Devas! The fame of all these *śaktis*, as well as of You will be spread in the seven worlds and in the whole Universe.

51. O Hari! The human beings on this earth will constantly worship with selfish ends these *śaktis* and You, for the fructification of their desires.

52. Having various desires, men will, in Your worship, present various offerings, recite the Vedic *mantrams*, and repeat the names of You and the *śaktis*.

53. O Viṣṇu! You will be the God of the Immortals, and your glory will be enhanced by the worship offered by the human beings in the world as well as in the heavens.'

54. Vyāsa said: "O king! The heavenly voice, thus bestowing boons on Viṣṇu, ceased. Viṣṇu Bhagavān became very glad to hear this.

55-58. Then Hari, the God of Gods, completed duly the sacrifice and dismissed the Devas and the Munis, the sons of Brahmā. Then ascending on His *vāhana* Garuḍa, He went up to Vaikuṇṭha with His followers. The Devas also went to their own respective places. The Munis also retired gladly to their own hermitages, all thunderstruck to see these things, conversing with each other about this sacrifice.

59. O king! on hearing this clear beautiful, sonorous heavenly voice, all were filled with best devotion towards the Supreme Force; then the *dvījas*, the Munis and Munīndras began to worship with devotion, according to the *Vedas*, that Highest Force, the Supreme Goddess, giving all desired objects profusely in all the details.

Here ends the thirteenth chapter on the Devī Yajña by Śrī Viṣṇu in the third Adhyaya in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam; the Mahā-Purāṇam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the glories of the Devī

1-2. Janamejaya spoke: "O Dvīja! I have heard in detail the Devī Yajña, performed by Śrī Viṣṇu. Now describe Her Glory and glorious deeds. After hearing the Devī's glorious deeds, I will also perform that best of all sacrifices. Thereby I will no doubt be pure through your favor."

3. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hear, I am describing to you the history of the most auspicious mighty deeds of the Devī, according to the *Purāṇas*.

4-5. In days of yore, there reigned in the country of Kosala, the king Dhruvasandhi of the Solar Dynasty. He was the son of Puspa and

celebrated on account of his great prowess. He was truthful, religious, engaged in doing good to his subjects, obeying the laws of the four castes and *āśramas*. He being pure, performed his regal duties in the flourishing city of Ayodhyā.

6. The *brahmāṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras* and other good persons all lived religiously under his rule, each abiding by his own profession.

7. No thieves, cheats, cunning persons, vain and arrogant persons, treacherous and illiterate men were allowed to remain in his kingdom.

8. O host of Kurus! Thus ruling virtuously, the king had two wives, both of them young, fair and beautiful, and well able to give delights and enjoyments to the king.

9. The first and lovely wife was Manoramā, and the second was Līlāvatī. Both of them were exceedingly handsome, intelligent and qualified.

10. The king enjoyed much with them in palaces, gardens, romantic hills, lakes, and various beautiful mansions.

11. In an auspicious moment, Manoramā gave birth to a beautiful child, endowed with all royal qualifications. The child was named, in due course, Sudarśana.

12. Next within one month, his second wife the fair Līlāvatī in the auspicious fortnight and on an auspicious day, gave birth to an excellent child.

13. The King then performed the *jāta-karma* (ceremonies on the birth of a child) and being very glad, made lots of presents, wealth, etc., to the Brahmāṇas.

14. The King showed affection equally to the two children; never he made any distinction between them.

15. The king, the tormenter of the foes, was very glad and performed duly the *chudā-karana* ceremony according to his position and wealth.

16. The sight of these two sons delighted very much the people. Now seeing these *kritachūdas*, and playing, the king was merged in the ocean of pleasure.

17-18. Sudarśana was the eldest; but Satrujit, the second beautiful son by Līlāvatī, was of sweet and persuasive speech. His beautiful figure and sweet words gave very much delight to the king, and for these qualities, the child Satrujit turned out also a favorite of the people and ministers.

19. The king could not show so much affection to the unfortunate Sudarśana as he showed to Satrujit.

20-21. Thus some days having passed, one day the king Dhruvasandhi went out on a hunting expedition to the forest. He killed in the forest many deer, *ruru* (a kind of deer), elephants, boar, hares, buffaloes, rhinoceros and camels, and amused himself very much with this hunting affair.

22-23. While he was hunting thus, a lion got very much enraged, and from a bush, suddenly jumped upon the king. That king of the beasts was already struck with arrows; now seeing the king in front, he loudly roared.

24-25. He angrily lifted his long tail high up in the air and, puffing up his manes, jumped up high in the air to attack and take the life of the king. Seeing this, instantly the king took sword in his right hand shield in his left and stationed himself like another lion before him.

26. The king’s followers, one and all, angrily shot arrows on the lion.

27. Then a loud uproar ensued; and all began to hurl arrows as best as they could. But after all, that dangerous lion fell upon the king.

28-29. Seeing thus, the king struck him with his sword, but the lion also tore asunder the king with his sharp nails. The king thus struck by the lion,

fell on the spot and died. The soldiers cried aloud and killed the lion with arrows.

30. Thus both the king and lion lay dead on the spot; and the soldiers turned back to the palace and gave all the informations to the royal ministers.

31. When the *munis* heard the demise of the king, they went to the forest and performed the cremation of the dead body of the king.

32. The Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha performed all the funeral ceremonies duly on the same spot, thus ensuring the king the safe journey to the next world.

33. All the subjects and the citizens and the Muni Vasiṣṭha counselled each other to install Sudarśana on the throne as the king.

34-35. The minister-in-chief as well as the other members proposed that as Sudarśana is the son of the legal wife, calm and quiet, beautiful and endowed with all the royal qualifications, he is fit for the throne. Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha said, 'The royal son, though not attained to proper age is still religious; therefore he is really fit be installed as king on the royal throne.'

36. When the wise aged ministers thus decided, Yudhājit, the king of Ujjain, on hearing the decision hastened to the spot.

37. He was the father of Līlāvatī; on hearing the demise of his son-in-law he came there, so that his daughter's son might get the kingdom.

38. Next, Vīrasena, the king of the country of Kaliṅga and the father of Manoramā, came there also with the object that his daughter's son Sudarśana be the Emperor.

39. The two kings, accompanied respectively by their own army and soldiers, began to counsel with the aged ministers, each trying so that his daughter's son may get the throne.

40. Yudhājit made the question: 'Who is the eldest of the two sons? Is it always the case that the eldest will inherit the kingdom? Will not the youngest ever be able to acquire it?'

41. Vīrasena said: 'O king! He who is the son of the legal wife inherits the kingdom; this I have heard from the learned who are proficient in the knowledge of the *śāstras*.'

42. Hearing Vīrasena, Yudhājit repeated 'Sudarśana is not so qualified with royal qualifications and other matters as this son of the late king, Satrujit. How can then Sudarśana inherit the throne?'

43. O King! Then quarrels ensued amongst the two kings. Now, at this critical juncture, who is able to solve their doubts?

44. Yudhājit then addressed the ministers: 'You all are prompted by selfish ends; you want to acquire a good deal of money by making Sudarśana the king.

45-46. I have come to know by your gestures and postures that your decision is to the above affect. After all, as Satrujit possesses many more qualifications than Sudarśana, he has more claims to the throne; and therefore he is fit to occupy the throne and no other. Morever, let me see as long as I live who can set aside the claims of a qualified prince, in possession of an army, and put forward the claims of a prince who has no qualifications it all.

47. I am ready to fight and I will tear the earth into two pieces by my sword. What more have you to say on this?

48. Hearing this, Vīrasena addressed Yudhājit 'I see the two boy's intelligence the same. You are intelligent; kindly mention where is the difference?'

49. O king! The two kings quarrelling with each other, remained there; the subjects and the Ṛṣis, seeing this, were very anxious.

50. Hundreds of tributary princes wanting that the two kings might be involved into quarrels with each other, came to the spot, with their soldiers, though they had to undergo great hardships in doing so.

51. Many aborigines, from the inhabitants of Sringaverpur, hearing the demise of the late king, also appeared on the scene with the sole object to plunder.

52. The two princes are minors; and hearing their parties at war with each other, many robbers from various adjoining countries came also there.

53. Thus when the war broke out between the two kings, the great confusion and tumult across within the kingdoms; on the other hand, Yudhājit and Vīrasena both became ready to fight."

Thus ends the Fourteenth Chapter on the narration of the glories of the Devī and the death of the Kosala king Dhruva Sandhi in the 3rd Adhayāya of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam.

Chapter XV—the battle between Yudhājit and Vīrasena

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! When the war was declared, the two kings, excited by greed and anger, took up arms; and a dreadful encounter ensued.

2. On one side the king Yudhājit of long arms, surrounded by his own army, with bows and arrows came ready to fight.

3. On the other hand, the fiery Vīrasena, the second God of the Devas appeared in the battle, following a true Kṣatriya custom, on behalf his daughter's son.

4. Then that truthful king Vīrasena, seeing Yudhājit in battle, became very angry and hurled arrows on him as a cloud rains on the mountain tops.

5. On being covered, as it were, by the sharp and swift arrows, sharpened on a stone slab, hurled at him by Vīrasena, Yudhājit, too, quickly shot arrows at Vīrasena and cut off all his arrows.

6. O King! A dreadful fight then ensued between the cavalries, the warriors on the elephants; and the Devas, men and Munis began to witness this terrible battle with wonder and astonishment. Birds, vultures and crows, desirous to eat the flesh of the dead soldiers, flew in the air.

7. Blood of elephants, horses and warriors, the bodies that lay dead, flowed in awful torrents like rivers in that deadly battleground. The torrent of blood excited fear amongst those who came to see it, as the river Vaitaranī on the way to hell is very fearful to the sinners.

8. The human skulls were driven ashore by the current and they look like so many hollow shells of gourds scattered there for the play of the boys on the banks of the Yamuṇā.

9. When any warrior lay dead on the field, the vultures began to fly about in the air for devouring his flesh. It seemed then that the soul of the warrior beholding his beautiful body tried to reenter into his body, though he thought that it had become very inaccessible to him.

10. Some warriors on being slain in the battle instantly arose in a celestial car to the heavens and was seen addressing the celestial nymph, who came already within his embrace, thus 'O one of beautiful thighs. Behold! how my beautiful body is lying on the earth below!'

11. Another warrrior thus slain got up in the heavens on a celestial car, came in possession of a celestial nymph and when he was sitting with her in the car, his former wife in the earth made herself a *sati* and burnt herself up in the funeral pyre, thus got a celestial body, came up to the heavens; and that chaste virtuous woman drew away perforce her own husband away from that celestial nymph.

12. Two warriors, went up, slew each other and lay down dead at the same time. They went up in the heavens at the same time and there began quarrel with each other and fight with their weapons for one and the same celestial nymph.

13. Some hero got in the heavens a nymph more lovely and beautiful than himself, and he thus became very much attached and devoted her. He began to describe his own heroic qualities and also to dotedly copy the qualities of his lover so that she might remain faithfully attached to him.

14. The dust arising from the dreadful encounter of the soldiers in the battlefield rose up in the air and covered the sun. It appeared like night. After awhile that dust became absorbed in the blood below, and the sun appeared very red, reflected with the color of the blood.

15. Some Brahmacārī fought in the battle and was slain. He went up to the heavens; instantly a lovely-eyed Devakanyā, a celestial nymph desired to select him as bridegroom with great devotion. But that clever man did not accept the offer, thinking that his vow of *brahmācārya* would be thus broken.

16-17. O King! Thus when the battle was deadly, the king Yudhājit shot a sharp, dreadful arrow at Vīrasena and severed his head from body. Vīrasena lay dead on the battlefield and his army was routed. The soldiers fled away from the battle.

18-19. Hearing that her father was slain in the battle, Manoramā became very terrified and anxious. She then began to think that the vicious wicked king Yudhājit will surely slay her son, for kingdom's sake and to satisfy his enmity with her father.

20. 'What shall I do now? My father is slain in the battle. My husband is no more. My child is a minor today. Where shall I go?

21. Greed is very sinful; who is there that cannot be bought over by love of gold? and what vicious act can there be, that cannot be done when actuated by covetousness?

22. A greedy man does not hesitate to kill his father, mother, spiritual guide, friends and others. There is no doubt about this.

23. It is the inordinate love of worldly things that makes a man eat what is held unclean in society, that makes a man approach a woman who is unapproachable, and it is greed that makes a man discard his own religion and become an apostate.

24. In this city I find none so powerful as I can remain there under his shelter and be able to rear up my child.

25. What can I do if the king Yudhājit slay my son? There is none in this world who can save me, and, counting on whose shelter, I can stay here without any anxiety.

26. And this my co-rival wife Līlāvatī will always practice enmity with me. She will never show mercy on my son.

27. When Yudhājit will arrive in this city, I will never be able to go out of it and he will today put my son in the prison on the pretext that he is a minor.

28-29. I heard that, in days of yore, Indra entered into the womb of his pregnant stepmother with a small thunderbolt in his hand, divided the foetus into seven parts with that weapon, again each of these seven into seven parts again, thus the forty-nine Maruts were born in the Heavens.

30-31. I heard also that in ancient times one queen gave poison to destroy the foetus in the womb of her rival wife. When the child came out of the womb, he was celebrated by the name of Sagara (with poison) in this earth.

32. The husband was alive, and still his queen Kaikeyi banished the eldest son of his king, Śrī Rāmacandra to the forest; and the king Daśaratha sacrificed his life for that very reason.

33. The ministers no doubt wanted before to install my son as the king; but now they are not independent; they have now yielded themselves to the king Yudhājit.

34. There is no brother of mine powerful enough to release me from my bondage; I see I have fallen into a great difficulty by the combination of unforeseen circumstances.

35. Though the success depends on Fate, still one should make an earnest effort. If one does not make any effort, fate also remains asleep. I will therefore soon make out a plan to save my son.'

36-38. O King! Thinking thus, that woman Manoramā called in private the best and very respectable minister Vidalla, who was intelligent and expert in everything, and holding the hands of her son and weeping, said humbly in a depressed spirit 'O Minister! My father is slain in the battlefield, this my son is a minor, and Yudhājit is a powerful king; consider all these and tell me what I should do now?'

39-40. The venerable minister Vidalla then said to the queen Manoramā 'It is never advisable for us to stay here. Soon we will go into the forests of Benares. There I have got my powerful uncle Subāhu. He is prosperous and has got a strong army. He will protect us.

41. I will make the pretext that I am become very anxious for the king and therefore I am going out to see the king Yudhājit and will go out of the city in my chariot. There is no doubt about this.'

42-43. Hearing, thus, the Vidalla's words, the queen Manoramā went to Līlāvatī and said 'O faireyed! Today I am going to see the father Yudhājit.'

Thus saying, she went out of the city in a chariot, accompanied by her son, attendants and Vidalla.

44-45. Grieved at the loss of her father, fearful, distressed, and fatigued, Manoramā saw Yudhājit and performed the cremation of her father Vīrasena; and trembling with fear, got to the banks of the Ganges after two days' swift journey.

46-48. There Nisāda robbers plundered all their riches, took the chariot and went away. Manoramā had only the clothing that she wore left to her. She began to weep, and holding the hands of her attendant, went to the Ganges shore, being afraid crossed the river on a raft and went to the Chitrakūta mountain.

49. That terrified Devī went to the hermitage of Bhāradvāja as early as possible. There she saw the ascetics and was relieved of her fear.

50. Bhāradvāja asked, 'O lotus-eyed! Who are you and whose wife are you? Why have you taken so much trouble to come here? Answer all these truly.

51. O beautiful one! are you a Devī or a human being? your son is a very minor. Why have you come in this dense forest? It seems, as if you are deprived of your kingdom.'

52. Thus asked by the best of the Munis, the beautiful Manoramā became very much afflicted with grief and began to weep; she could not speak anything herself and ordered Vidalla to inform the Muni all what had happened.

53-54. Vidalla then said: 'There was a king of Kosala, named Dhruvasandhi. She is the legal wife of that king. Her name is Manoramā. That powerful king of the Solar Dynasty was killed by a lion in a forest. This boy Sudarśana is his son.

55. The father of this Manoramā was very religious. He died fighting for the cause of his daughter's son. Now the present queen has become much afraid and has therefore come to this wild forest.

56. The son of this woman is now a minor; he is now taking your refuge. O best of the Munis! Protect them.

57. To give protection to any distressed person is to acquire merits higher than performing a sacrifice. Therefore to protect one who is very much afflicted with fear and who is helpless will have still higher merits.'

58. Bhāradvāja said: 'O beautiful one! Remain in this hermitage without any fear; rear up your son here. O auspicious one! There is no cause of fear here from your enemies.

59. Better nourish and support your child. Your son will surely be a king and if you remain in this hermitage, no sorrow or grief will overtake you.'

60. Vyāsa said: "When the great Muni Bhāradvāja said thus, the queen Manoramā became peaceful. The Muni gave them a cottage to live in and there they dwelt without any sorrow.

61. Thus Manoramā dwelt obediently with her maid servant, liked by all. Vidalla also remained there and Manoramā began to nourish her child."

Here ends the Fifteenth chapter on the Devī Māhātmya and the battle between Yudhājit and Vīrasena and the going away of Manoramā to the forest in the 3rd Adhyāya of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—the glory of the Devī

1. Vyāsa said: "After gaining the victory in the battle, the king Yudhājit returned to the city of Ayodhyā with his huge army and asked, 'Where are Sudarśana and Manoramā?' He wanted to kill Sudarśana.

2. He repeatedly exclaimed 'Where are they gone?' and sent his servants on their search. Then, on an auspicious day, he installed his daughter's son on the throne.

3. Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha was engaged as the priest; he and the other ministers began to chant the auspicious hymns of the *Atharva-veda* and with the jars filled with water consecrated by these hymns, installed Śatrūjit on the throne.

4. O best of the Kurus! Conch shells resounded; drums, *bherīs* and *tūriyas* resounded; and great festivals and rejoicings took place in the city.

5. The reciting of the Vedic *mantrams* by the Brahmāṇas, the chanting of hymns by the bards and the auspicious acclamation of Victory to the new king resounded the whole city of Ayodhyā with joy.

6. When the new king Śatrūjit ascended on the throne, the subjects were filled with joy; everywhere hymns were sung; drums were resound. At this Ayodhyā looked as fresh as ever.

7-8. O King! Though there were thus great rejoicings and festivals, yet some good persons were found that remembered Sudarśana and gave vent to this feeling of sorrow, thus: 'Alas! Where has that prince gone? Where has that chaste queen Manoramā gone with her son? Oh! The enemies have killed his father for greed of kingdom.'

9. The saints with their views impartial, thus rendered uneasy and sorry, began to pass away their time there subject to Śatrūjit.

10. After installing duly his daughter's son on the throne and after having made over the charge of the kingdom to the wise councillors, Yudhājit turned towards his own city.

11-12. Afterwards Yudhājit heard that Sudarśana was staying in the hermitage with the Munis. He started at once for Chitrakūta and went

quickly to Durdarśa, the chief of the city of Sringavera, being accompanied by Bala, the chief of the Nīsādas.

13-15. Hearing that Yudhājit was coming there with his army, Manoramā began to think that his son was a minor and became very sorrowful, distressed and terrified. Then she with tears in her eyes addressed the Muni thus: 'Yudhājit is coming here; what shall I do and whither shall I go? He has slain my father, and has installed his daughter's son on the throne. Still he is not satisfied and he is now coming with his army here to kill my minor child.

16-21. O Lord! In days of yore, I heard that the Pāṇḍavas, when they went to the forest, lived in the holy hermitage of the Munis with Draupadī. One day the five brethren went hunting, and the beautiful Draupadī stayed without any fear with other maidservants in the hermitage where there was the chanting of the *Vedas* by Dhaumya, Attri, Gālava, Paila, Jāvāli, Gautama, Bhṛgu, Chyāvana, Kanva of the Atrigotra, Jatu, Kratu, Vītihotra, Sumantu, Yajñadatt, Vatsala, Rāśāsana, Kahoda, Yavakrī, Yajñakrit, Kratu and other holy high-souled Ṛṣis like Bhāradvāja and others.

22-23. While the five great heroes Arjuna and others, the destroyers of their enemies, were roaming in the forests, Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu came with his army to the hermitage, hearing the reciting of the Vedic hymns.

24. Hearing thus, that king quickly descended from the chariot so that he might have a sight of these holy Maharṣis.

25-27. Accompanied by two attendants only, he approached to the Munis and, finding them engaged in the study of the *Vedas*, waited there with folded hands for an opportunity. O Lord! When the king Jayadratha on entering the hermitage took his seat, the wives of the Munis came there to see the king and began to enquire "Who is this person?"

28. With the wives of the Munis came there also the beautiful Draupadī. Jayadratha looked upon Draupadī as if she were the second goddess Lakṣmī.

29-30. Looking at that lovely royal daughter who looked like the Deva girls Jayadratha asked the Maharṣi Dhaumya, "Who is this beautiful lotus-eyed lady? Whose wife is she and who is her father? What is her name? Oh! From her beautiful appearance it seems that the goddess Śacī has come down on earth."

31. This fair woman is shining like the celestial nymph Rambhā surrounded by the Rākṣasīs, or like the beautiful creeper Lavaṅgalatika encircled by thorny trees.

32. O good ones! Tell truly whose beloved is she? O Brahmāṇas! It seems that she is the wife of some king, not the wife of a Muni.'

33. Dhaumya said: 'O king of Sindhu! She is the daughter of Pānchāla; her name is Draupadī; she is the wife of the Pāṇḍavas; they are residing in this forest, having got rid of their fears.'

34. Jayadratha said 'Where have those powerful Pāṇḍavas of great prowess gone now? Are they dwelling in this forest, free from fears?'

35. Dhaumya said: 'The five Pāṇḍavas have gone out on hunting, ascended on a chariot. They will return at noon with their game.'

36-37. Hearing the Muni's words Jayadratha got up, and going near to Draupadī, bowed down to her and said: 'O Fair One! Is there everything well with you? Where have your husbands gone? Today it is eleven years that you are residing in the forest.'

38. Draupadī then said: 'O prince! Let all be well with you, wait here for a short while; the Pāṇḍavas are coming quickly.'

39. While Draupadī thus spoke, that powerful king, being overpowered with greed and avarice, stole her away, disregarding all the Munis present there.

40-42. O Lord! The wise should never trust anybody; if on anybody he places his trust, he will surely come to grief. For example, see the case of the king Bali. Bali, the son of Virochana, and the grandson of Prahlāda, was prosperous, devoted to his religion, true to his promise, performer of sacrifices, generous, always giving protection to and liked by the saints and a great warrior. His mind never turned to any irreligious subject and he performed ninety-nine Yajñas with full *dakṣiṇas* (remunerations).

43-44. But the Bhagavān Viṣṇu, who is all full of Sāttvik purity and who is never affected with passions and changeless, who is always worshipped by the *yogīs*, in the form of a dwarf in his Vāmana incarnation as the son of Kaśyapa Ṛṣi, to serve the Devas, stole away his whole seagirt earth and kingdom deceitfully on hypocritical pretext.

45. O Lord! I heard that the son of Virochana was a generous large-hearted king. He truly resolved to give what was wanted; but Viṣṇu behaved with him deceitfully to serve the cause of Indra.

46. When the pure, *sāttvik* Viṣṇu could assume this dwarf incarnation to bring about the hindrance to Bali's *yajña*, what wonder is that other ordinary mortals would practice things like that?

47. Therefore never trust on anybody in any way. Lord! Where there are greed and avarice, reigning in one's heart, what fear can he have to perpetrate any evil deed?

48-49. O Muni! It is through avarice that men commit sinful deeds; they do not care what good or bad will happen to them in the next world. Thoroughly overpowered by greed, they take away in mind, word and deed other's things; and thus they become fallen.

50-51. Lo! Human beings always worship the Gods for wealth; but the Devas do not give them wealth instantly; they give them these things through others by making them carry on trade, make gifts, or show their strength or by making them steal.

52. The Vaiśyas worship the Gods simply because they think they will be highly prosperous and therefore they sell many things as grains, cloth and the like.

53. O Controlled one! Is there not the desire to take away the other's property in this act of merchandise? Certainly there is. Besides the merchants, when they find that when people are in urgent need of buying articles from them, expect that the price of those articles might run higher.

54. O Muni! Thus everyone is anxious to take away other's properties. How, then, can we trust them?

55. Those who are clouded by greed and delusion, their going to places of pilgrimages, their making charities, their reciting the *Vedas*, all are rendered useless. Though they go to the holy places, etc., still these things bear no fruits to them, as if they have not done these things at all.

56. Therefore O Enlightened one! You make Yudhājit go back to his own place. Then I will be able to remain here, like Sītā, with my son.'

57-58. On Manoramā's thus speaking to the Muni, the fiery Maharṣi went to Yudhājit and said: 'O King! You better go back to your own place or anywhere else you like. The son of Manoramā is a minor; that queen is very much grieved; she cannot come to you now.'

59. Yudhājit said 'O peaceful ones! Kindly cease showing this impudence and give me Manoramā. I will never go away leaving her. If you do not give her easily, I will take her away by force.'

60. The Ṛṣis said 'O King! If there be any strength in you, you can take away Manoramā by force; but the result will be similar to that when the

King Visvāmitra wanted to take away the heavenly cow by force from the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha.'

Thus ends the Sixteenth Chapter on the glory of the Devī and the going of the King Yudhājit to the hermitage of Bhāradvāja, to kill Sudarśana, in the the 3rd Adhyāya of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—the story of Viśvāmitra

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of the Maharṣi Bhāradvāja and seeing that he made a firm resolve, the King Yudhājit called his prime minister quickly and asked, 'O intelligent one! What am I to do now? I want to carry away by force this boy with his mother sweet Manoramā; no one desirous of one's welfare won't trifle away his enemy, be he even a very weak one; if he does so, that enemy will get stronger day by day, as the disease consumption becomes stronger; and will ultimately become the cause of death.

4. There is no warrior, nor any soldiers here of the other party; no one will be able to resist me; I can take away, as I like, the enemy of my daughter's son and can kill him.

5. I will try today to carry him away by force, and Sudarśana being killed, my daughter's son will reign fearlessly without an enemy; there in no doubt about this.'

6. The prime minister said: 'No such hazardous courage need be shown now; you have heard the Maharshi's words; he quoted you the example of Viśvāmitra.

7. O King! In days of yore, Viśvāmitra, the son of the King Gādhi, was a celebrated monarch; one day while roaming, he accidentally reached the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha.

8. The powerful king Viśvāmitra bowed down before the Muni, and the Muni gave him a seat. The king took his seat there.

9. Then the high-souled Vasiṣṭha invited the king to a dinner. Viśvāmitra, the king, went there with his whole army.

10-12. There was a cow, named Nandinī, of Vasiṣṭha. The Muni prepared all sorts of eatables from her milk and entertained them all. The king with his whole army was very much pleased; and, coming to know of the divine power of the cow, asked Vasiṣṭha to give his cow Nandinī over to him and said 'The udder of your cow Nandinī is like a big jar. I will give you thousand cows like that; I pray you to let me have your cow Nandinī.'

13. Vasiṣṭha said 'O King! This is my wish-fulfilling cow; I cannot give you this cow in any way, let your thousand cows be yours.'

14. Viśvāmitra said: 'O Saint! I will give you *lakhs* of cows, or tens and hundreds of *lakhs* of cows, or any number you like. Please give me your cow; in case you be unwilling, I will carry her away perforce.'

15. Vasiṣṭha said: 'O King! As you like, better take it perforce; I will never be able to give you my cow Nandinī from my house.'

16. O King! Hearing thus the Vasiṣṭha's words, Viśvāmitra, the King, ordered at once his powerful followers to carry the cow Nandinī away by fastening a cord round her neck per sheer force.

17-19. The followers, obeying the order at once bound the cow with ropes and began to carry her away by force. At this Nandinī, trembling and with tears in her eyes, began to say to the Muni 'O One whose wealth consists only in asceticism! Are you going to leave me? Otherwise why these fellows are binding me with a cord and dragging me away?'

At this the Muni replied “O Nandinī! I have never parted with you; I perform all my sacrifices through your milk. O auspicious one! I honored this king, my guests, with eatables prepared from your food and for that reason he is carrying you away from me by sheer force. What can I do? O Nandinī! I have not the least desire to part with you.’

20. Hearing these words from the Muni, the cow became very angry and bellowed loudly and terribly.

21. At once came out from her body, on that very spot, the terrible demons wearing coats of armor, and holding various weapons; and they uttered aloud, ’Wait; you will soon meet with vengeance.’

22. They then destroyed all the forces of the king. And the king alone was left and he went away alone, much dejected and sorrowful.

23. Oh! That wicked king then cursed with great humility the Kṣatriya *śakti;* and thinking the Brahmāṇaic power would be attained with great exertion, began to practice asceticism and penance.

24. Performing penance and *tapasyā* very hard indeed, in the great forest, Viśvāmitra, the son of Gādhi, succeeded at last in becoming a Ṛṣi and then he renounced his Kṣatriya-*dharma*.

25. Therefore, O King! Dost thou never quarrel with these ascetics and be involved in wars resulting in great enmity and causing the extinction of the race.

26. Better dost thou appease the Muni and now go back to your own kingdom. Let Sudarśana remain here at his pleasure.

27. O King! This minor boy has no wealth; what harm can he do to you? It is useless to show your enmity towards an orphan, a weak minor boy.

28. This world is under the control of Destiny; therefore one should show mercy to all. O king! What use is there to show one's jealousy? What is inevitable will surely come to pass.

29. O king! The thunderbolt comes sometimes like a blade of grass; a blade of grass acts sometimes like a thunderbolt.

30. O king! You are very intelligent; consider that by, combinations of circumstances, a hair can kill a powerful tiger and a gnat can kill an elephant. Therefore dost thou forsake this rashness and hear my beneficent advice.'

31. Vyāsa said: "O king! The best of kings, Yudhājit hearing the prime minister's advice bowed down humbly at the feet of the Muni and returned to his own city.

32. Manoramā, too, became free from anxiety, and, remaining peaceful in the hermitage, began to nourish and support her child, engaged in vows.

33. The lovely son of the king began to grow daily like the phases of the waxing moon and sport fearlessly with the boys of the Munis, altogether, wherever they liked, a sight very auspicious.

34. One day the minister Vidalla came there and the sons of the Munis seeing him began, in the presence of Sudarśana, to address him "Klib, Klib."

35. Sudarśana, too, hearing them pronounce "Klib, Klib" took up the one letter, "Kli" and uttered this only repeatedly, which is, in fact the prince of the root-*mantras* of Kāma (*klīṁ*), with *anusvāra* (*ṁ*) omitted.

36. Then the son of the king took that *mantram* and silently repeated this in his mind.

37. O King! Thus that boy Sudarśana was initiated in this root-*mantra* of Kāma (desire) spontaneously, out of his original *saṁskāra* (innate tendency) owing to the unavoidable destiny of Fate.

38-39. The son of the king, when he was five years old, got this most excellent *mantra*, though without its Ṛṣi (seer) meditation, without its *Caṇḍa* (meter) and without Nyāsa (assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities, accompanied with prayers and corresponding *mudras*), and considered this as the quintessence of all, therefore meditated this always in his mind spontaneously and never forgot it.

40-41. When the king's son grew eleven years old, the Muni performed his Upanāyana (sacred thread) ceremony and made him begin the study of the *Vedas*. The son, with that *mantra* power, soon mastered all the studies about archery, all the moral and political sciences in conformity with proper rules, within a very short time.

42-43. One day Sudarśana got a vision of the form of the Supreme Goddess, of a red color, wearing red apparel and decorated with red ornaments, mounting on Garuḍa and with Her wonderful Vaiṣṇavī powers and Her face, fully opened like the budding of a lotus flower.

44. Thus, expert in many branches of learning, Sudarśana served his Mother in that forest and began to wander on the banks of the Ganges.

45. One day the Mother of the Universe gave a bow, sharpened arrows, quiver and a mail coat of armor to that boy in that forest.

46-47. O King! At this time the extraordinary beautiful and lovely princess Śaśikalā, endowed with all auspicious qualities, the daughter of the king of Kāshi, came to hear that a beautiful prince named Sudarśana, a second Kandarpa, full of heroism and endowed with all auspicious qualities is dwelling in a forest.

48. The princess, hearing this from a soothsayer, mentally loved and desired him and wanted finally to accept him as her legal husband.

49-50. Thus, on one occasion, at the end of a night, the Goddess appeared in her dreams before her and consoled her and said 'O fair one! ask a boon from me; Sudarśana is My devotee; at My word he will fulfill all your desires.'

51. Thus seeing the beautiful figure of the Goddess in her dreams and hearing Her sweet words, the honored Śaśikalā was drowned in the ocean of bliss.

52. When the princess awoke, her face beaming with gladness, her mother perceived her joy and inferred that her daughter must have been internally very glad, and asked her repeatedly, but Śaśikalā was too much abashed and did not give vent to the cause of her satisfaction.

53. The princess, remembering her dreams, began to laugh repeatedly on account of her excessive joy. At last she spoke out in detail all about her dreams to one of her lady friends, or companions.

54. On one occasion, that large-eyed Śaśikalā went out for enjoyment to a nice garden beautified with *campaka* flowers, attended by her companion.

55. While the King's daughter was seated under a *campaka* tree collecting flowers, she saw a Brahmāṇa coming towards her in great haste.

56. After bowing down before him, that beautiful princess, endowed with all auspicious qualifications, addressed him in sweet words 'O blessed one! whence are you coming?'

57. The Brahmāṇa said: 'O girl! I am coming on an errand from the hermitage of Bhāradvāja Muni. Please mention what you are going to ask me?'

58. Śaśikalā replied ’O Noble one! What beautiful thing is therein that hermitage that is extraordinary and worth describing.’

59. The Brahmāṇa said ’O fair one! There is staying the most lovely Sudarśana, the son of the King Dhruvasandhi. He is the loveliest of all men.

60. O fair one! He who has not seen him, I think, has his eyes given to him in vain.

61. O auspicious one! It appears as if the Creator, with a view to see how it looks, has invested him with all the qualities.

62. O beautiful one! what shall I say more to you, suffice to say that, that prince is fit to become your husband. I think that the Creator has, no doubt, settled already the union between you two, as a happy union of two congenial things (gold in union with Jewel).’

Thus ends the seventeenth chapter on the story of Viśvāmitra and on the getting of the root mantra of Kāma by the son of the King in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII— Śaśikalā’s Svayaṁvara

1. Vyāsa said: “The King’s lovely daughter was very glad on hearing the words of the Brahmāṇa, and drowned herself in ecstacy of love. The Brahmāṇa also departed, thinking of the whole affair.

2. The daughter was already attached to the prince, and now she became the more merged in love for him and became very anxious. Now, on the departure of the Brahmāṇa, she felt herself struck by the arrows of love.

3-4. Then Śaśikalā, oppressed by love, addressed her dear companion, who followed her inclinations thus: ’O my companion! I have not as yet had any knowledge of the king’s son; still the signs of love have sprung up in my body and mind, from the moment that I heard about him from the

Brahmāṇa. The love is giving me much trouble; tell, my companion what am I to do now? and whither shall I go?

5. O dear companion! I saw him like a second God of Love in my dreams; and, since then, my innocent mind is being troubled with his being away from me.

6. O fair one! The sandal paste on my body appears to me like a poison, this garland is like a serpent and the moon's rays seem like a fire.

7. O companion! My mind gets not rest anywhere, in palaces, gardens, in lakes, in hills, at any time, during the day or night; all the enjoyable things have assumed now contrary aspects and are paining me.

8. The bedding, betel leaves, music, singing, and dancing, all now fail to give me satisfaction and peace.

9. O companion! I would have gone today where is residing that deceiver; but I fear for my father as well for the honor of my family.

10. My father is not yet declaring the *svayaṁvara* for my marriage. What shall I do? Had he given me in marriage to that Sudarśan, I would have allowed him embrace me and satisfy his passions today!

11. O friend! look at the strange ideas of the Creator! There are hundreds of kings today who are influential and I do not consider them beautiful; and that King's son is exiled from his kingdom and yet he has stolen away my heart.'

12. Vyāsa said: "Thus that King's son, Sudarśana, though helpless, and living in a forest on roots and fruits, deprived of wealth, power, and army, began to reign in the heart of that princess.

13-14. Śaśikalā, too, began to recite slowly the root-*mantra* of Sarasvatī (*aiṁ*) and therefore her love towards this prince held out signs of success.

Once engaged in meditation on that excellent root-*mantra* of Kāma (*klīṁ*), and while repeatedly reciting it mentally, he got in a dream the vision of that Ever-Full, the World Mother Ambikā, that cannot be expressed in words, the Vaisnavī-*śakti* capable to bestow all wealth and property.

15-16. At this time the King of Nisādas, the lord of Śriṅgaverpur came to the hermitage and presented an excellent chariot together with all other necessary things. This chariot was drawn by four horses, decorated with nice flags and was endowed with the prospect of getting victory everywhere; thinking it thus a befitting present to be given to the King, he gave it to Sudarśana.

17. Sudarśana accepted the offer of a friend and worshipped him well in return, with roots and fruits of the forest.

18-19. The lord of the Nisādas, thus worshipped as a guest, went away. The Munis and ascetics then began to address Sudarśana with fondness 'O son of the king! Don't be anxious and restless; within a very short time, you will get your kingdom, no doubt, by your own good luck and prowess.

20. O one attached to one's vows! The Goddess that enchants the whole universe, the Giver of boons, Śrī Ambikā, has been pleased with you; assistance is also rendered well to you; therefore do not trouble yourself with contrary thoughts any more.'

21. The Munis, who have taken vows, addressed Manoramā also 'Your son will soon become the lord of the world; you need not care any more.'

22. Then the lean and thin Manoramā, hearing the Muni's words said, 'O Brahmāṇas! Let your *āsiss* (words of benedictions) be justified with success. What wonder that a kingdom be obtained by the good will of the Sādhus!

23. There is no force, no minister, no help, no property; how, under what combinations, can then my son get kingship?

24. You are the best of the knowers of *mantrams;* due to the influence of your good will, my son will surely be a king; there is no doubt about this.'

25. Vyāsa said: "Wherever that intelligent Sudarśana used to go on his chariot, there he seemed by his own prowess, as if he were surrounded by a whole army consisting of 109, 350 foot soldiers, 65,610 horsemen, 21,870 chariots and 21,870 elephants.

26. This is the influence of the seed-*mantra;* it is not an ordinary acquisition. It is because Sudarśana meditated on his seed-*mantra* with gladness and one-pointedness of mind, that he acquired the above powers; there is no doubt about this.

27. Becoming pure and peaceful, whoever gets this wonderul seed-*mantra* from a true spiritual guide and meditates on it incessantly, is destined certainly to attain all desires.

28. O best of kings! There is no such thing either in the heavens above or in the worlds below, that a man won't get when the Supreme Goddess becomes pleased.

29. Those are certainly very unfortunate and of dull intellect, who cannot place their faith on the worship of this Goddess and consequently suffer incessantly all sorts of troubles.

30. O best of the Kurus! At the beginning of the creation, this Ambā Devī was the Mother of all the Gods, and is therefore known as the First Mother.

31. She is practically seen in this world in the shape of *buddhi* (intellgence), *kīrti* (fame), *dhṛtī* (fortitude), *lakṣmī* (wealth), *śakti* (force), *śraddhā* (faith), *mati* (intellect), *smṛti* (memory), etc.

32. It is only the deluded souls that do not realize the nature of the Devī; it is only those whose hearts are destroyed by the glare of false argument, that do not worship this All-auspicious Goddess of the Universe.

33-34. O king! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śambhu, Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Vāyū, Agṇi, Kuvera, Viśvakarmā, Pūsā, Bhaga, the two Asvins, Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, Viśvedevas, Maruts—all worship the Supreme Deity of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution.

35. Who is there amongst tho wise that does not serve this Highest Energy? The real nature of that Auspicious Goddess, the Bestower all desires, Sudarśana came to know very well.

36. She is the Real Essence, Brahman, very rarely realized; She is the Higher Vidyā and the Lower Vidyā (*avidyā*) and She is the vital energy, the *mukhya-prāṇa* of the best of the *yogīs* who are desirous of liberation.

37. O king! What individual is there that is able to realize the nature of Pramātmā (the Highest Universal Self) without having recourse to Her, Who is manifesting this universal consciousness by bringing into existence these *sātvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik* creations.

38. Sudarśana, though he dwelt in the forest, realized a greater happiness than that in obtaining the sovereignty of a kingdom, by constantly meditating on that Goddess.

39. Śaśikalā, too, being too much oppressed with the arrows of love, somehow remained with her soul in her body, having to be always cared for her health in various ways by her attendants.

40. Then the king Subāhu, on coming to know that her daughter is desirous of getting her husband, made arrangements for her *svayaṁvara* (a marriage in which the girl chooses her husband from among a number of suitors assembled together) without any delay.

41-44. The Paṇḍitas say the *svayaṁvara* of a royal family is of three kinds: *icchā-svayaṁvara* (optional), *panya-svayaṁvara* (by fulfilling a promise), e.g. Rāmacandra broke in two the bow of Śiva and married Sītā; the *svayaṁvara*, preferring one who will prove the strongest hero by one's own prowess. Of

these three kinds of *svayaṁvaras*, the king Subāhu preferred *icchā-svayaṁvara* (according to the bride's free choice). Accordingly the king employed many artisans, had platforms covered with beautiful carpets and big halls decorated beautifully in various ways.

45-47. Thus when the assembly hall for the *svayaṁvara* was built and decorated, and all the necessary articles and equipments brought thither, the fair-eyed Śaśikalā told her companions with sorrow, 'Better go to my mother and say her privately that I have already selected mentally my husband the beautiful Sudarśana, the son of the king Dhruvasandhi in my mind; I won't marry any other prince than him; the Goddess Bhagavatī has settled him for my husband.'

48-50. Vyāsa said, "The companions of Śaśikalā hearing thus, went quickly to her mother Vaidarbhī and addressed her sweetly in private 'O chaste one! Your daughter, with a sorrowful heart, has sent me to you to say the following. Please hear and do at your earliest convenience, what is good and beneficial. "There is staying in the hermitage of Bhāradvāja the son of the king Dhruvasandhi; I have mentally selected him as my husband; I won't select any other prince."

51. Vyāsa said: "The queen, hearing her words, told to her husband, when he returned to the palace, all her daughter's words as she had heard them.

52-53. Hearing this, the king Subāhu was astonished and then laughed frequently and then began to say to his wife, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha the following true words: 'O fair one! That king's son Sudarśana is a minor, he has been exiled to the forest; now he is helpless and is residing with his mother in a dense forest.

54. For his sake, the king Vīrasena was slain in battle by the king Yudhājit. O fair-eyed! how can that helpless exiled poor boy become her husband.

55. Do say therefore to Śaśikalā that, in the assembly hall for her Svayaṁvara, many kings commanding honor and respect would be

present. She would then choose whomever she likes. She need not repeat such words anymore.'

Thus ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the 3rd Skandha about the Svayaṁvara of Śaśikalā, the daughter of the king Kāsirāja in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX— Sudarśana going to the Svayaṁvara

1-2. Vyāsa said: "After the king Subāhu had spoken thus, the Queen made her daughter Śaśikalā, who had always sweet smiles on her lips, sit on her lap and after consoling her with sweet words, began to say 'O fair-eyed! You always practice vows and other religious performances; why are you, then, speaking these unpleasant words? The King has heard all what you wanted to say and has been very sorry.

3-5. That Sudarśana is very unfortunate, deprived of his kingdom, helpless, devoid of wealth and army, abandoned by his friends, exiled with his mother in the forest, subsisting on roots and fruits, lean and thin. Thus he is not worthy of becoming the husband of yours. There are many princes learned, beautiful, approved of all, qualified with all royal marks, fit to become your husband. They all will come in this Svayaṁvara.

6. There is one brother of this Sudarśana, who is endowed with all kingly qualifications, beautiful, and qualified in various other ways. He is the king of the Kosala country.

7. There is another point worth consideration; please hear it. The King Yudhājit is trying his best to kill Sudarśana on a befitting opportunity.

8. He already counselled with his ministers and killed in a desperate fight the king Vīrasena and installed his daughter's son on the throne.

9. Even he came up so far as the hermitage of Bhāradvāja to kill Sudarśana; afterwards he was prevented by the Munis from doing so then he returned home.'

10-11. Śaśikalā replied: 'Mother! That prince, though staying in the forest, is approved of by me; under the advice of Śaryāti, the chaste Sukanyā married Cyāvana Muni and served her husband all along; so I will marry this king's son and will always be engaged in serving him. The women are able to attain heaven and emancipation if they serve their husbands; therefore if we be sincere in serving our husbands, we will no doubt be happy.

12. I have seen in my dream that the Goddess Bhagavatī has ordained him to be my husband; how can I now accept any other body as my husband than him?

13. The Devī Bhuvaneśvarī has pictured his frame firmly in my heart; I will never be able to leave my dearest beautiful husband to contract marriage with any other person.'

14. Vyāsa said: "Thus the mother, the daughter of the King of Videha, found many signs and at last desisted. She then reported to the King all the words of Śaśikalā.

15-16. Then Śaśikalā, on the day before the marriage day, became very anxious and sent in a great hurry, one trustworthy Brahmāṇa versed in the *Vedas* to the hermitage of Bhāradvāja with this message: 'O Brahmāṇa, go in such a way to Sudarśana, as my father be not able to know about it and tell Sudarśana all my words.

17-18. My father has called in for my marriage a *svayaṁvara* ceremony; many powerful kings will attend with their armies. O Deva! The Goddess Bhagavatī has ordered me in dream and accordingly I, with full gladness of my heart, have become yours already in my heart.

19. Rather I will take poison or I will jump in a blazing fire than obey my father's and mother's words and marry another.

20. By my mind, word and deed, I have selected you my husband; and pleasure and happiness is sure to attend on us by the blessings of the Bhagavatī.

21. Please depend on Her, at Whose command this whole universe, moving and unmoving is resting, unto that Great Destiny and come to this place without fail.

22. What the Goddess, whose commands Śaṅkara all the other Devas obey, has ordered, can never turn out false.

23. O Brahmāṇa! You the foremost amongst the virtuous; do therefore call on that King's son in privacy and speak out all there to him. What shall I say more to you. Do all that my object may be fullfilled.'

24. Thus saying, she gave the Brahmāṇa his *dakṣiṇa* and sent him to Sudarśana. He went there and reported all the matter duly to him and quickly returned back.

25. On coming to know all this, Sudarśana determined to start; and the Mahārsi Bhāradvāja, with gladness, sent him.

26. Vyāsa said: "Seeing her son ready to start, the mother Manoramā became very sorry and, trembling and shedding tears, thus spoke to her son.

27-28. 'Sudarśana! Where are you going now? How do you dare to go there in the *svayaṁvara* alone, where are present kings and all your terrible enemies. O Son! You are as yet a boy. The King Yudhājit will certainly go there with the object of killing you; there will then is no other body to help you. So you should never go to that place.

29. You are my only son; I am very poor and helpless; I have no other to lean upon than you; therefore you ought not to throw me in despair at this moment.

30. See Sudarśana! The King Yudhājit who had slain my father, that uncontrollable king will come there; if you go there alone, he will certainly kill you.'

31. Sudarśana replied 'Mother! What is inevitable will certainly come to pass; there is no need to discuss further on the subject. I will go at the command of the World Mother to that assembly hall *svayaṁvara*.

32. O Auspicious one! Do not give vent to sorrow; I do fear none by the grace of the Bhagavatī.'

33. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, Sudarśana mounted on his chariot and was ready to start. Seeing this Manoramā began to bless him and so cheer him.

34-37. O Son! Let Ambikā Devī protect your front; Padmalochanā protect your back; Pārvatī, your two sides; Śivā Devī, all around you; Vārāhī, in dreadful paths; Durgā, in royal forts, Kālikā, in terrible fights; Parameśvarī, in the platform hall; Mātaṅgī, in the Svayaṁvara hall; Bhavānī, the Avertress of world, amidst the kings; Girijā, in mountain passes; Camuṇḍā, in the sacrificial ground, and let the eternal Kāmagā protect you in the forests.

38. O Descendant of Raghu family! Let the Vaiṣṇavī force protect you in quarrels; let Bhairavī protect you in battles and amongst your enemies.

39. O Son! Let the Mahā Māyā Jagaddhātrī Bhuvaneśvarī protect you everywhere and at all times.'

40. Vyāsa said: "Then Manoramā, speaking thus to him, trembled with fear and again said: 'O Sudarśana, I will also accompany you; there will not be otherwise.

41. I will never be able to remain anywhere without you and even for the twinkling of an eye. O Son, carrry me thither where you are desiring to go.'

42. Thus saying, his mother with her attendants was ready to start. The Brahmāṇas pronounced their blessings. All then went out.

43. Sudarśan, the descendant of the Raghu family, mounted then alone on his chariot and reached Benares. There the King Subāhu, hearing that he had come, welcomed him and worshipped him with various presents.

44. He gave him a house for his residence, and made arrangements for his food and drink and other necessary requirements, and gave order to his servants to wait on the prince.

45. Then from various quarters, the kings assembled together; and Yudhājit, too, came there accompanied by his daughter's son, Śatrujit.

46-48. The King of Karūsa, the King of Madra, the King of Sindhu, the King of Māhīsmatī, the Valiant warriors, the King of Pānchāla, the kings of the mountainous tract, the King of Karṇat, the powerful King of Kāmarūpa, the King of Chola, and the very powerful King of Vidarbhas with 180 Aksauhinī soldiers, all arrived and assembled there. Benares was then crowded all over with soldiers.

49. Many other kings came there on their beautiful elephants to witness the *svayaṁvara* ceremony.

50. Then the princes began to talk amongst themselves: 'The King's son Sudarśana, too, had come there and is staying unconfused and calm.

51. Is it that the high-minded Sudarśana, born of the Kākutstha family, had come there on a chariot, helpless, to marry?

52. Can it be that the princess will overlook these Kings with soldiers and weapons, and select the long-armed Sudarśana?'

53. Then the King Yudhājit addressed all the other kings 'I will slay Sudarśana for the sake of the daughter; there is no doubt about this.'

54-55. Hearing Yudhājit's words, the king of Keral, the foremost of those who know morals, began to say: 'O king! In this *icchā-svayaṁvara* it is not proper to fight. Here there will be no marriage for the prowess; there is no arrangement fixed to steal away the bride elect by force; here the bride will select of her own free choice; what cause can then there crop up here for quarrels?

56. Before, you had driven him out of his kingdom; and though you are the superior king, you have taken his kingdom by force and installed your daughter's son on the throne.

57. O King! This Sudarśan is born of the Kākutstha family and the son of the King of Kosala. Why would you kill this innocent boy?

58. O Long-lived! Better be sure that there is some God of this Universe; He is governing all; and if you commit anything wrongful know that you will get the fruit of that due to you; there is no doubt about this.

59. O King! There is victory everywhere of the Truth and *dharma;* always you find *adharma* and falsehood defeated. Therefore dost thou forsake your evil and mean intentions and pacify your vile mind.

60. Your daughter's son is also present here; he is beautiful and prosperous and is reigning a kingdom. Why will not that bride elect him as bridegroom?

61-62. Consider again that there are many other powerful princes and kings in this *svayaṁvara;* the princess may select them also. Therefore let all the kings assembled here say that if the selection of the bridegroom be performed in that way, what cause of a quarrel can there crop up? Knowing all these, you ought not to quarrel here.'

Thus ends the Nineteenth Chapter on the going to the Svayaṁvara assembly of Sudarśana and the other kings in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses, by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—the kings' conversation

1. Vyāsa said: "O Noble-minded one! The king Yudhājit replied to the address of the king of Keral, thus:

2-3. 'O King! You are truthful and have restrained your passions. What you have told just now in this assembly of kings is all correct and approved by morality. O best of the kings! You are born of a high family; you better say how can this take place that when so many fit persons are present here to become the bridegroom, can an unworthy person take away the offer?

4. As a jackal never becomes fit to enjoy what are the dues of a lion, so this Sudarśana is also unfit to acquire this bride elect.

5. The Brahmāṇas have the *Vedas* as their strength; the Kṣatriya kings take bows and arrows to be their source of strength; this is ordained everywhere. Therefore O King! What wrong have I done in my statement? Kindly explain.

6-7. The power of the kings is the befitting money given to the parents of a bride; according to this, the strongest man is to acquire the bride, a jewel. The Kṣatriyas that are weak can never acquire that. Make this the rule in this marriage. This earth is fit to be enjoyed by the heroes only and not by the cowards and intriguing persons. Otherwise quarrels are sure to ensue amongst the kings.'

8. The dispute thus arose in that Svayaṁvara hall; and the king Subāhu was called in.

9. The kings that could see the reality of things then addressed the king Subāhu. 'O king! You are requested to establish a golden rule in this marriage ceremony.

10. What is your object in calling this *svayaṁvara?* Better give it out after a mature consideration. Please be explicit whom have you intended to give over your daughter in this marriage?'

11-12. Subāhu said: 'My daughter has mentally selected Sudarśana; I prevented her repeatedly from doing this; but she did not accept my word. What shall I do now? The mind of my daughter now is not at her will. Sudarśana, too, though uninvited, has come here singly and is residing calmly, without any signs of disturbance in his mind.'

13-14. Vyāsa said: "Then the chief kings all invited Sudarśana there; Sudarśana, too, came there quietly, and the princes, seeing his quiet nature, asked him, 'O one, engaged in practising vows! Who has invited you here? Why have you come here singly in this assembly of kings?

15. You have no force, no ministers, no help, no wealth, and no army. O intelligent! Then explain why have you come here alone?

16. In this assembly of kings you see that the powerful monarchs are ready to fight with each other for the sake of this princess. What do you intend to do under these circumstances?

17. Your brother, too, is come here to have the princess; he has got his army and is also marked with his strength and valor. The powerful Yudhājit has come here also to help him.

18. O observer of good vows! Seeing you without any army, we have narrated to you all the facts. Now think and do accordingly. If you please, remain here or go anywhere else.'

19-20. Sudarśana replied: 'True, I have no army, no help, no wealth, no forts, no friends or no kings to protect me. Hearing that this *svayaṁvara* will

be held here, I have come here to witness it. But there is one particularity here; it is this: the Devī Bhagavatī has ordered me in my dream to come here. Under Her command I have come here; there is no doubt about this.

21. I have got no other object in view; I have obeyed what the Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī has ordered me to do. Today will happen, no doubt, what She has ordained.

22-23. O kings! I am seeing everywhere the Supreme Goddess Bhagavatī Bhavānī. I do not know what is enmity. Therefore there is no enemy of mine in this world; but whoever will turn out an enemy of mine, will be duly punished by the Mahā-Vidyā Mahā-Māyā.

24. O kings! What is inevitable will surely come to pass. There will be nothing otherwise. I am always depending on Fate, Destiny. What is the use, then, in thinking what will be the result?

25. Everywhere in the Devas, in the spirits, in men, in all the beings, the Devī's power is existent; it cannot be otherwise.

26. O kings! Whenever She wishes, She makes kings, masters of wealth or devoid of wealth. What is, then, the use of bothering my head in this?

27. When even the Gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa without Her presence, become powerless to move their hands or feet, then why shall I be anxious for the result?

28. O kings! Whether I am unable or able or an ordinary person, you have nothing to consider; I have come here in this assembly hall under the command of the Supreme Bhagavatī.

29-30. What She has willed, She will do that. I am not to care for that. O high-minded ones! You need not be afraid at all in this. I have told you all truth. Victory or defeat, I feel no shame in either of them. For I am always under the control of Bhagavatī; therefore if there be any shame here, it is all Hers.'

31-33. Vyāsa said: Hearing thus his words, and seeing that his mind is firmly devoted to Bhagavatī, the kings saw each other and said thus: 'O Sudarśana! What you have said is quite true; it is never otherwise; still Yudhājit, the king of Ujjain is intent on killing you. O intelligent! O sinless! we have all come to know that there is no trace of evil in you. We were all overcome with pity for you; hence we have informed you; now think and do the needful.'

34. Sudarśana said, 'You are all kind and large-hearted; what you all have said is quite true. What shall I tell you, being a minor as yet!

35. O kings! No one can cause the death of another. All this world, moving and unmoving, is under the control of Fate.

36-38. No soul is independent; everyone is under the effects of one's own *karma*. The Paṇḍitas that have realized the Truth say that *karma* is of three kinds: *accumulated, present* and *prārabdha.* This whole world is due to Kāla (Time), Karma (action) and Svabhāva (Nature); unless the proper time comes, even the Devas cannot kill men. The men are killed on account of some immediate cause; but the Great Time is the real Destroyer.

39. My father, though a destroyer of many others, was himself killed by a lion, and my mother's father was slain by Yudhājit in the battle.

40. The *jīvas*, though caring hard to preserve their lives, are killed by Fate in spite of all their cares; and they may live a thousand years though there is none to protect them.

41. O religious kings! I do not fear a bit from Yudhājit. I consider Fate as the Supreme and I therefore remain always undisturbed, calm and quiet.

42. Daily and constantly I remember Bhagavatī, Who is the Mother of all this Universe. She will look after my welfare.

43. Behold! One will have certainly to bear the burden of one's past *karma*, whether it be good or it be bad; one's own actions must bear their fruits. Then why shall he be sorry, who has come to know this?

44. The less-intelligent deluded persons, on getting pain from their own actions, turn out enemies on very trifling matters.

45. I do not grieve nor do I fear on account of such enemies. I am staying here in this assembly of kings, cool-minded.

46. Under the order of Caṇḍīkā, I have come here to see this *svayaṁvara;* whatever is inevitable will surely come to pass.

47. The words of the Bhagavatī are the best proof; I do not know any other. My mind is entirely given up to Her. There will be nothing otherwise than what She has ordained; whether it is good or whether it is bad.

48. O kings! Let Yudhājit remain in peace. I have no enmity with him. He, who will deal inimically with me, will certainly reap his reward. There is not the least doubt in this.'

49. Vyāsa said: "O king! When Sudarśana addressed them thus, all the kings became very glad and they all remained there for the *svayaṁvara*. Sudarśana, too, went to his camp and remained also calm and quiet.

50. Next day the king Subāhu invited all the kings present in his city to their respective seats in the *svayaṁvara* hall.

51. The princes and kings, decorated with best ornaments, came and took their seats on their respective platforms, covered with valuable carpets of best workmanship.

52. The kings then looked like the celestial Devas, wearing divine ornaments and apparels, blazing with the lustrous light of gems, and remained to see the *svayaṁvara* affair.

53. Everyone there had this foremost thought in his mind: ’When will the princess, the bride elect, come here; and who will be the man so fortunate as to be blessed with garlands offered by her (as a token of selection of the bridegroom)?

54. If accidentally, she offers the garland to Sudarśana in this *svayaṁvara* assembly, then will no doubt ensue desperate struggles amongst the kings.’

55. While they were thus meditating, sounds of drums were loudly sounded.

56-58. Then Subāhu, the king of Benares, went to his daughter and found that Śaśikalā had just taken her bath and put on her silken clothes, and adorned herself with various ornaments and sweet garlands. Thus dressed in complete marriage dress, she began to shine like another Goddess Lakṣmī, the Goddess of wealth. The king, on seeing his daughter dressed in silken cloth, afflicted with anxious thoughts, just smiled and said, ’Child! Rise and take the beautiful garlands by your hands and go to the the Svayaṁvara hall and just look at the assembly of kings.

59. O lean-bodied one! Whoever well-qualified, beautiful, and of noble birth, amongst the kings is reigning in your mind, better select him.

60. O graceful! The kings from various quarters are adorning their respective seats; better go and see and select whomever you like.’

61. Vyāsa said: “When Subāhu had spoken thus, Śaśikalā, who generally talked little, replied with sweet sonorous words, impregnated with religious truth.

62. ’Father! I won’t go before the kings who are inspired by lust; women like me never go there; it is those that are dissolute that attend those places.

63. Father! I have heard from the religious texts that women should cast their glances on their husbands only and not on any other.

64. The woman that goes to many persons is mentally claimed by all; each of them contemplates strongly "Let this woman be mine." Thus her chastity is destroyed.

65-66. Desirous of selecting her husband, when the woman holding in her hands the garland for her would-be-husband, goes to the *svayaṁvara* hall, then she turns out like an ordinary unchaste woman. As a prostitute going to a public shop looks on many persons and judges of their merits and demerits according to her own power of judgment, the maid that goes in the *svayaṁvara* hall does exactly the same.

67. How can I behave myself in the hall of the assembly of kings like a prostitute, who does not attach her feelings firmly on a single individual but glances constantly at many lustful persons?

68. Though this system of *svayaṁvara* is approved by the elderly persons, I am not going to follow that now. I will take the vow of a chaste woman and act up to that doctrine as perfectly.

69. I will never be able to act like an ordinary woman going in the *svayaṁvara* hall, mentally determining many and finally selecting one.

70. Father! From the very beginning I have given myself up to Sudarśana in mind, word and deed. I have not the least inclination to leave him and select another in his stead.

71. O King! If you want to have my welfare, then give your daughter on an auspicious day and in an auspicious *lagna* to Sudarśana, according to the prescribed rites.'

Thus ends the 20th Chapter on the Svayaṁvara hall and the kingś conversation there in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—Subāhu fulfills the advice of his daughter

1. Vyāsa said: "On hearing the sound words of his daughter Śaśikalā, pregnant with reason, Subāhu the king of Benares became very anxious and began to think what he would do now, so short a space of time in this momentous occasion, thus:

2-3. 'All the powerful kings have come here on intention that they would fight, and therefore they are all attended with their armies and followers respectively; and they are now sitting on their respective diases in the *svayaṁvara* hall. If I go now and tell them that my daughter Śaśikalā is not willing to come of her own accord in the hall, the evil-minded kings will certainly kill me out of their wrath.

4. I have not so much strength, whether in my army or in forts, as to be able to decline these kings and drive them away from my kingdom.

5. Sudarśana, too is, alone, helpless, wealthless, and a mere boy. What shall I do now? Alas! I am now plunged in deep sorrow.'

6. Thinking thus, with head bowed down by humility, the king went to the kings, and said thus:

7. 'O Kings! The girl, though requested repeatedly by me and her mother, is not willing to come to this hall. What can I do now?

8-9. I am your servant and, bowing my head at the feet of you all, pray to you to accept my worship and return to your own cities respectively. I am ready to give a sufficient quantity of gems and jewels, clothes, elephants, chariots. Kindly accept these and go back to your own homes.

10. My daughter is as yet a girl; if I chastise her, she may commit suicide; and I will be exceedingly sorry; therefore I am very much distressed with this thought.

11. You all are fortunate, energetic, and of a merciful disposition; what will it serve you to accept the daughter of mine, who is disobedient and unfortunate?

12. I am your obedient servant; show your mercy on me and it is your duty to consider my daughter as your own daughter.’

13. Vyāsa said: “Hearing Subāhu’s words, the kings did not utter a single word; but Yudhājit, with his eyes reddened out of wrath, began to address the king of Benares in an angry tone:

14. ’O King! You are a veteran fool; what do you say now after committing a most blameable act? Had you any doubt as to your proceedings, why have you, out of sheer delusion, called this meeting hall of *svayaṁvara*, without thinking the matter beforehand?

15. You have invited the kings and princes in this marriage ceremony *svayaṁvara;* and they all have assembled here; how can they now go back to their homes?

16. Are you going now to insult these? and will you give your daughter in marriage to Sudarśana? Nothing can be more ignoble than this!

17. The welfare-seeking person ought to judge beforehand, then to act. But you have started your work without any previous judgment and decision. You will have to reap its fruit; there is no doubt of this.

18. Why are you now thinking of giving your daughter to this helpless, wealthless Sudarśana in the presence of kings that are powerful and that command a great militia?

19. O thou most sinful! Today I will certainly kill you; next I will kill Sudarśana and then give your daughter to my daughter’s son; know that this is my firm resolve.

20. Who is there, when I am standing in this assembly, that can aspire to carry away the bridegroom elect by force or theft? Nothing to speak of Sudarśana who is powerless, wealthless and a mere boy!

21. I spared his life before in the hermitage of Bhāradvāja at the Muni's request; but today I will not spare the boy under any circumstances whatsoever.

22. Therefore, please go and consult with your wife and daughter, and give your dear beautiful daughter to my daughter's son.

23. Be engaged in a marriage tie with me by giving your exquisitely beautiful daughter to my daughter's son. You can very well judge that it is always proper and advisable that a great man shall come under the protection of another great man.

24. What happiness can you expect from this Sudarśana, who is helpless and banished from his kingdom, that you are going to give him your dear and auspicious daughter!

25. Family, wealth, army, appearance, kingdoms, forts and true friends and other helping persons—these a man should consider when he is going to give away his daughter in marriage to anybody; else there is no surety of happiness. Think over the royal custom and the never-failing *dharma,* and do what is proper. Never it is advisable to do any act abandoning the path of *dharma* and morals.

26. You are my intimate friend; therefore I am telling you these good words. O king! Better bring your daughter, surrounded by her attendant maids, in this hall of *svayaṁvara*.

27. Let this daughter select any man other than Sudarśana; I have got no cause of quarrel; and the marriage will then be celebrated according to your will.

28-29. O best of kings! The other kings are all of high descent; and they have armies and are all in positions befitting your connection! If the daughter chooses any one amongst them, then no quarrels would arise. But if the daughter chooses Sudarśana, then certainly I will carry her by force. Therefore, O king! act in such a way that no quarrels occur in future.'

30-31. Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed by Yudhājit, the king of Benares was very sorrowful, and, after a heavy sigh, went to his palace and told with a grieved heart to his wife, thus:

'O fair-eyed one! Now I am completely under your control; you better explain to Śaśikalā that a dreadful quarrel is now to occur; what am I to do now?'

32-33. Vyāsa said: "Hearing her husband's words, the queen went to her daughter and spoke thus: 'O child! Quarrels have now ensued amongst the kings for your sake; your father has become very sorrowful; therefore, O fair one! Choose any other man your husband than Sudarśana.

34-35. O Child! If you do not judge and rashly choose Sudarśana, then the powerful king Yudhājit, possessing a large army, will no doubt kill you, me and Sudarśana. It might be, if quarrels ensue, you might be married to another husband; therefore better think now and act.

36. O dear-eyed! It is now your incumbent duty to choose another king for your husband, if you want your and my welfare and happiness. Leave Sudarśana.'

37. The mother thus advised her daughter; the king, too, afterwards explained and tried to convince her. The girl spoke fearlessly.

38. 'O king! What you have said is all true; but you know my firm resolve already. I won't ever select any other king than Sudarśana.

39-40. O king! If you are afraid and be in agony, then do this thing: better give me in marriage to Sudarśana and then drive us away from your city.

He will put me in his chariot and go away out of your city. After that what is inevitable will surely come to pass. There cannot be anything otherwise.

41. O king! You need not fear anything about what is kept in the womb of future by Destiny. What is inevitable will happen; there is no doubt about this.’

42. The king said: ’O child! The intelligent persons never show too much rashness and insolence. The learned people, versed in the *Vedas*, say it is never advisable to quarrel with many persons.

43. How can I give my daughter in marriage to one and then banish them both? The kings have turned out enemies. There is no heinous crime that they cannot commit now.

44. O child! If it be your opinion, I can pledge something as a pawn for your marriage, as the king Janaka pledged in days of yore for her daughter Sitā.

45-47. I will also put forward a pawn very difficult to be carried out, as Janaka originally made an offer of the hands of Sitā to whomsoever who would break the Śiva’s strong bow. Thus the quarrels amongst the kings might be diminished; for he who will be able to fulfill the promise, will be able to accept you. Then, be he Sudarśana or any other king, whoever will be strong to fulfill the promise will take you as his wife.

48. Thus the quarrels will cease and I will also be able to perform your marriage ceremony in peace and happiness.’

49. The daughter said: ’Father! On hearing from you, I am merged in an ocean of doubt, for it seems to me what you are saying is the act of a fool; already, I have chosen in my mind Sudarśana for my husband; now it cannot be otherwise.

50. O king! The mind is the source of virtue and vice. When I have mentally selected, how can I now forego him and choose another?

51-52. O king! If you keep any pledge, then I will be subject to any and everybody; if one, two, or more fulfill the same pledge, I will be then subject to any or all of them. Father! in that case quarrels may arise. What shall I do then? I cannot give my vote on this doubtful point.

53. O king! You need not fear anything. Better give me in marriage to Sudarśana according to the prescribed rules; then, in that case, the Goddess Caṇḍīkā will certainly protect us.

54. O king! Taking Whose Name destroys a whole host of sins, take Her Name and think the Almighty and perform carefully our marriage ceremony.

55. Better go to the kings' assembly today, and, with folded hands, tell them come tomorrow to the hall of *svayaṁvara*.

56-57. Thus bidding goodbye to the kings, perform in the right spirit, according to the prescribed rites, our marriage ceremony. Next, after giving fit dowries and other articles after the marriage, better tell the prince Sudarśana to depart. The son of Dhruvasandhi will take me away with him.

58. If at this, the kings get angry and be ready to quarrel with you, then in that case, the Goddess Bhagavatī will no doubt help us.

59. Sudarśana then will fight against those kings; and if he loses his life perchance in the battle, then I will also follow him and die.

60. O king! Let all good come unto you! Better give me in marriage to Sudarśana and remain here with your army. I will go alone with him, the object of my love.'

61. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words from her daughter, the king Subāhu trusted her, and firmly resolved to act according to that, and to celebrate the marriage of Śaśikalā."

Thus ends the 21st chapter on the king of Benares fulfilling the advice of his daughter in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—Sudarśana's marriage

1. Vyāsa said: O King! Then, on hearing his daughter's words, that high-souled king of Benares, Subāhu, came to the spot where the kings were staying and said: 'O kings! Now you can go to your own camps; tomorrow I will perform my daughter's marriage ceremony.

2. Let you all be pleased with me and graciously accept the food and drink given by me. Tomorrow let you all come here and perform my daughter's marriage ceremony.

3. O Kings! My daughter is not coming today to this hall of *svayaṁvara.* What can I do now? I will console her and bring her here tomorrow. Therefore do you all go now to your own camps respectively.

4. Intelligent persons should not quarrel with the members of their own family. But they should always show kindness towards their own sons and daughters who are under their protection. Somehow I will make my daughter understand and bring her tomorrow morning. You may all go now to your places as you desire.

5. Tomorrow morning we will settle about the pledge, whether by choice or by fulfilling a promise that requires strength, and have the marriage celebrated; or better you all together would decide what mode of *svayaṁvara* is to be adopted.'

6. The kings heard Subāhu and trusted him. Then seeing that the city is well-guarded on all sides, they went to their own camps and performed their midday duties.

7-8. The king Subāhu on this side began to perform all the duties regarding the marriage of his daughter, after duly consulting with all the chief members of the family. At the appointed time of marriage he brought his daughter in a well-concealed and guarded chamber, had the bathing ceremony of the bridegroom elect performed by the priests, versed in the *Vedas*, and had him well-dressed and did other requisite things. Then he brought the bridegroom in the house, made him seat on a *vedī* (platform) and duly worshipped him.

9. Then the large-hearted king gave to the bridegroom a seat, *āchamanīya* (water for rinsing the mouth and such articles of food as require rinsing one's mouth after eating them), *arghya* (articles for worshipping deservedly), *pādyam*, e.g., water for washing the feet with an offer of green grass, rice, etc., made in worshipping a God or a Brahmāṇa), the two silken cloths and sheet, cows, and two earrings—and then wanted to give Sudarśana his daughter.

10. The high-minded Sudarśana accepted all the offerings given by the king. Seeing this, Manoramā was relieved of her anxiety. Manoramā began to think of that beautiful and well adorned daughter as if the daughter of Kuvera (the God of wealth); and thanked herself and thought as if all her duties were over.

11. Then the royal ministers carried gladly and fearlessly the beautiful Sudarśana, worshipped with ornaments and clothing, in a good nice carriage to the center of the amusement court.

12. On the other hand, the elderly female members, who knew all about the prescribed rules, performed the dressing of the princess in a befitting manner and placing her in a beautiful conveyance took her before the bridegroom elect, in the marriage hall, where there was the platform regularly built.

13-14. The Sacred Fire was then lit, the royal priest began to perform the *homa* ceremony duly; when the ceremony of the bridegroom and bride

united in love was duly performed, the priest called them there. After this the bridegroom and bride performed duly the *lājā-homa* ceremony and circumambulated the Sacred Fire. Thus all the ceremonies, befitting the *gotra* and family, were all fully performed according to the prescribed rules.

15-17. Then the king Subāhu, excited by feelings of love in the marriage time, gave to the prince Sudarśana the following presents: two hundred well adorned chariots, with horses and the arrow cases filled with arrows, one hundred and twenty-five elephants dressed with golden ornaments, looking like so many mountains, one hundred beautiful female elephants and one hundred maidservants, all dressed in golden ornaments.

18-20. The king gave the bridegroom also one thousand servants well adorned, bearing a complete set of all sorts of weapons; many gems and jewels, clothing, nice variegated woolen clothes, beautiful capacious rooms to live in, and two thousand excellent horses born in the Sindhu country, three hundred good camels able to carry sufficient loads, and two hundred carriages filled with grains, etc.

21. Then the king bowed to the king's daughter Manoramā and with clasped hands, said: 'O royal daughter! I am now become your servant; now kindly say what is your desire?'

22. Hearing these beautiful words of the king, Manoramā said: 'O king! all good to you and let your family increase in sons and grandsons. You have increased my honor by giving in marriage your daughter (jewel) to my son. I have no other desire than to see your welfare constant and the increase in your family, posterity and prosperity.

23. O king! Your are the chief amongst the kings. Your have made my son great and strong like the Sumeru mountain by giving him your daughter in marriage. You are high and my related. I am not the daughter of a panegyrist or a bard; how can I then praise you for this noble act of yours.

24-25. O king! Your character is wonderful and pure. What more shall I say to you than this: that you all, in the face of many other kings, have given your daughter to my son in marriage, who is banished from his kingdom, is deprived of his father and is living in the forest, penniless, armyless, subsisting himself on roots and fruits only.

26. In these cases the kings as a rule make relations with those only, who are their equals in rank and position, of noble families of equal grade, having forces and wealth equal to each other. No other king would have offered his beautiful well-qualified daughter in marriage to my prince who is without any wealth.

27. O king! On your this act, all the other kings, holding great influence and possessing armies, have turned out your enemies. I, being a woman am unable to describe the amount of patience in you.'

28. The king Subāhu of Benares, hearing the sweet words of Manoramā was highly pleased and, with folded hands, began to say, 'O Devī, you better take my this celebrated kingdom; I will become the commander of your forces and will try my best to guard this city.

29. Or you can take half of my kingdom and remain here with your son. It is not my desire that you leave this Benares and go and live in the forest.

30-31. The kings have become very offended; I will first try to appease them; if they be not satisfied, I will adopt the means of gift or sowing dissensions amongst them; and even if I fail in that, I will ultimately take to war. O Devī! Victory or defeat is under the hands of the Destiny; still victory comes to those who are in the right path and defeat to those who are in the wrong path. How then can the victor arise to those sinful kings?'

32. Hearing the king's words, pregnant with meaning, Manoramā felt herself highly respected; and, with a cheerful heart, said the following good words.

33. 'O king! let all good come on you! you better discard all fear and reign with your sons here; my son Sudarśana, too, will become the king of Ayodhya by the Grace of Śrī Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī, the Supreme Cause of the innumerable worlds, and will roam in this world; there is no doubt about this.

34. May Bhagavatī Bhavānī bring all good unto you; now kindly permit us to depart to our homes, O king! I always contemplate the Highest Goddess Ambikā; and I have no time to indulge in other thoughts.'

35. Thus, on various subjects, Manoramā and the king Subāhu began to talk with each other, causing satisfaction to both like nectar, when the morning broke out.

36. The kings, knowing early in the morning that the princess had been given away in marriage, became very much enraged, went out of the city and began to discuss with one another.

'We will kill today the king Subāhu, the disgrace amongst the kings as well that boy Sudarśana, totally unfit to marry the princess, and take away the kingdom and the princess Śaśikalā. How can we return to our homes, with this severe disgrace, stamped on our heads?

37. Hear, O kings! the sound of the drums, *mṛdāṅgas* and other instruments; the sounds of the conchshells have even been overpowered. Hark! The various musical sounds and the chanting of the *Vedas*. It is then certain that the King Subāhu has finished the marriage ceremony of his daughter Śaśikalā with Sudarśana.

38. Oh! This king has deceived us with his words and performed the marriage ceremony according to ordinary religious rules.

39. Now O kings! decide unanimously what to do and come to a definite conclusion.'

When the kings were thus discussing, the king of Benares, of indomitable prowess, the king Subāhu, after finishing his daughter's marriage, came there with his famous friends to invite them.

40. Seeing the King of Benares present, all the other kings did not utter a single word, but they remained silent, beaming with anger.

41. Subāhu then approached to the kings, bowed down, and, with folded hands, said: 'Be kind enough to come to my house for dinner.

42. O kings! My daughter Śaśikalā after all has selected Sudarśana; I could not help in this. You are all kind and noble; therefore you all be peaceful and let the matter drop.'

43. The kings hearing him were filled with rage and said, 'We have all taken food; our desires have been fulfilled; you better now go back to your own home.

44-45. Your behavior with us is all right and proper; now do your other duties and let the kings go back to their homes.' Hearing these words of the kings, the king of Benares was very much terrified and returned home, thinking that the kings were all filled with rage and might do serious harm to him. Thus he began to pass away his time in dire anxiety.

46. Then the king Subāhu disappeared; the kings united made this resolve that they would block the passage of Sudarśana, kill him, and take the girl away.

47. Some of these kings rather said: 'What is the use in killing the king's son. We will all go willingly to see the fun.'

48. Thus the kings went and remained blocking the path of Sudarśana; and the king Subāhu, on returning home, began to make arrangements for the departure of the bridegroom and the bride."

Thus ends the 22nd Chapter on Sudarśana's marriage in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—killing the enemies of Sudarśana

1. Vyāsa said: "After paying due respects to his new son-in-law, the king Subāhu cheerfully entertained him for six days with variety of good dishes.

2. Thus finishing the marriage ceremony, the king afterwards consulted with his ministers, presented the bridegroom and the bride various jewels and ornaments and other things given naturally on marriage occasions.

3. Then the king of Benares, of brilliant splendor, heard from his messengers that the kings had obstructed the way back of Sudarśana and became very absentminded.

4. Then Sudarśana, of firm resolve, told his father-in-law 'O king! better now give us order that we may depart. We will go without any fear.

5. O king! First we will halt at the holy hermitage of Bhāradvāja Muni; and next we will, after due considerations, settle where we would go.

6. O pure one! You need not fear a bit from these kings; the Mother of the Universe, the Bhagavatī Bhavānī will surely protect us.'

7. Vyāsa said: "O king Janamejaya! Hearing thus his son-in-law's orders, the king Subāhu gave him a vast amount of wealth and bade goodbye to him. Sudarśana, too, quickly departed.

8. The king Subāhu followed him with a Iong train of soldiers. Thus Sudarśana went on, in his journey, fearless.

9. The great hero Sudarśana, the descendant of Raghu, with his new consort in the chariot and followed by many other chariots, saw the soldiers of the several kings.

10. The king Subāhu, seeing them, became anxious. But Sudarśana gladly took refuge, with his whole heart, of the all-auspicious Goddess Śaṅkarī.

11. Sudarśana began to recite silently the excellent one-word seed-*mantra* of the King of Desires Kāmarāja (*klīṁ*) and, out of its power, he and his wife remained in the chariot without any fear and sorrow.

12. Then all the kings came there with their soldiers to fight with Sudarśana and to carry away by force the bride. Thus a loud uproar arose.

13. The king of Benares, seeing them, wanted to kill them. But Sudarśana, the descent of Raghu, desirous of victory, repeatedly asked him not do so.

14. Loud arose, then, the uproar caused by the sounds of conchshells, *bherri*, and war drums of the kings on one side and Subāhu on the other, each of the two parties determining to extirpate the other.

15. Śatrujit prepared himself for war to destroy his enemy. Yudhājit came there for his help, well-equipped with army, etc.

16-17. Some warrior kings remained there as witnesses with their soldiers. Then Yudhājit went in front of Sudarśana. His younger brother Śatrujit, too, attended Yudhājit to kill his brother in the battlefield. Then the warriors, overpowered with anger, shot each other with arrows.

18. A great encounter then ensued in the battlefield with sharp arrows. The king of Benares hurriedly advanced there, with a great body of army, to relieve his son-in-law.

19. Thus when the dreadful war began to grow more and more horrible, the Goddess Bhagavatī suddenly appeared there, mounted on Her Lion.

20-21. The beauty of Her body was exceedingly lovely; She was adorned with various excellent ornaments and She held various weapons. She wore divine clothing and the beautiful Maṇḍāra garland suspended from Her neck up to Her knees. The kings were greatly astonished to see Her. They

began to argue “Who in this Lady, mounted on a Lion? Whence has She so suddenly come?”

22-23. Beholding Her, Sudarśana told the king of Benares ’O king! Behold! The Divine Mahā-Devī has come here to favor us. She is very merciful. Now I am completely fearless.’

24. Sudarśana and Subāhu were highly delighted to see the beautiful Goddess, and bowed down to Her feet with great devotion.

25. Then the Lion, the vehicle of the Goddess, roared, making tremendous noise. Hearing the roaring of the Lion, all the elephants trembled. At that time the wind began to blow violently, and the four quarters assumed an awful appearance.

26-27. Then Sudarśana told his general to carry soon his forces where the kings were staying, blocking his way. ’What could the vicious kings do now, though they had become very angry? The Goddess Bhagavatī had come there to save us.

28. Now you all go safely and calmly through the midst of the kings. See! At my remembering Her, She has come here mercifully to save us.’

29-30. The general, on hearing these words, became ready to march by that route. Then Yudhājit, very much infuriated with anger, said to all the kings: ’Why are you all so much fear stricken? Kill this Sudarśana, stealing away this girl.

31. This lad, weak and without any support, will carry away by force and fearlessly the girl, spiting all the kings; and won’t you be able to do anything? This is very strange!

32. Are you afraid to see this one lady on a lion? O high-minded kings! Never trifle away this boy; kill him with all attention.

33. Killing him, we will then take away this girl. The jackal can never snatch away the lady under the grasp of a lion.'

34. Thus saying, the king Yudhājit, filled with anger, came to the battlefield with Śatrujit and all his forces.

35-36. That wicked king drew his bow string well-nigh to his ear and shot arrows after arrows, sharpened under stone and by blacksmith at Sudarśana, with the object of killing him. Sudarśana cut off all those arrows quickly with his own quick-going arrows.

37. Thus when the fight grew intense, the Goddess Caṇḍīkā became very much enraged and shot arrows at Yudhājit.

38. Assuming diverse forms, the Goddess Durgā, holding various weapons the auspicious Mother of the Universe, began to fight terribly in the battlefield.

39. Śatrujit and the king Yudhājit were killed in that terrible battle. Both of them fell dead from their chariots; and a shout of victory arose from the side of Sudarśan.

40. The uncle and cousin of the king Subāhu were on the side of Yudhājit and were killed. The kings were very much astonished to see them thus lying dead.

41. The king Subāhu, seeing them dead in the battlefield became very glad and began to praise and sing hymns in honor of Durgā Devī the Destroyer of all difficulties:

42-43. 'I bow to the auspicious Goddess Jagaddhātrī, again and again; I bow to the Bhagavatī Durgā the bestower of all desires; I always bow down to Her Who is auspicious, peace-giving, and the Higher Vidyā. O Mother! O Giver of salvation! O Auspicious One! You are pervading the whole Universe, O World Mother! and Upholder of the Universe! I bow down to Thee.

44. O World-mother! O Devī! you are devoid of *prākritik* qualities; you are full of qualities; beyond mind and speech; one cannot think out Your prowess, etc., by one's mind. Mother! you are the Highest Force; ever willing to destroy the miseries of your devoted persons. Your influence is Manifest everywhere; what eulogy can I sing of Thee.

45. O Devī! You are the Goddess of *vāk* (speech) of all beings; you are the all-pervading intelligence, mind, effort, and movements; you are the controller of the minds of all; therefore how can I praise You? O Goddess; You are the Self of all; how can I sing eulogies to You, who are beyond speech and mind, and to the Universal Self?

46. Brahmā, Hari and Hara and other higher Devas have not been able to find the limits of your qualities, though they are incessantly chanting your praises; O Goddess! I am the small of the smallest, I am without qualification, and bound by Prākritic qualities; I am ignorant as regards Jīva and Brahmā. O Mother! I will never be able to describe Your characteristics that are unfathomable.

47. O Mother! good companionships affect the fulfilment of one's desires. The purification of my heart has been effected incidentally. O Mother! my son-in-law is wholly devoted to you; accidentally there has arisen the connection between him and me and it is on account of his connection that I have been able to see You.

48. O Mother! Today I have got without any restraint or control of passions or *samādhi*, the rare vision of You, who is wanted to be seen even by Brahmā, Hari and Hara, Indra and the other Devas and by the Munis, who have attained their realization. Therefore who is there in this *trilokī* that is so fortunate as I am.

49. O Bhavānī! Where am I, void of intelligence and where is the rare vision of You, Who is the only medicine of this disease of the ocean of world? Still, O Mother! Who is worshipped by the Devas, I have got Your vision. Now I

have come to know that You always show mercy to Your Bhaktas, who are in their Bhavas (mental images of your Self).

50. O Goddess! You have saved Sudarśan in this great war crisis, and You have slain these two powerful enemies. How can I describe Your prowess in this matter? This I have understood that Your Holy character ever shows mercy on Your devotees.

51. O Goddess! Again this is not a matter to be wondered at, if one considers; for You are protecting this whole universe, moving and unmoving; and accordingly out of Your mercy, You have now protected your Bhakta Sudarśana, the son of Dhruvasandhi, by killing his enemy.

52. O Bhavānī! It is not merely for the protection of your Bhaktas, engaged in Your service, that You show this favor; but also to extol the meritorious deeds of your Bhaktas that You do such things; otherwise how is it that this Bhakta, saintlike Sudarśana, by marrying my daughter, has got victory in this battlefield?

53. O Mother! You are fully capable to destroy the fear of birth and death. What wonder is there that you fulfill the desires of your Bhaktas? The Bhaktas extol You by characteṛṣing You as *saguṇa* (full of qualities), *nirguṇa* (devoid of any quality) and *apārā*, beyond all merits and demerits.

54. O Goddess! O Bhuvaneśvarī! I am fortunate that I have been able to see You, and thus all my duties have become crowned with success. O Mother! I have no practices in the shape of Your meditation, etc. nor do I know any seed *mantras* of Yours; today I have fully seen Your glory Manifested.'

55. Vyāsa said: "Thus extolled by the king Subāhu, the Goddess Bhagavatī, the Bestower of the Absolute Freedom, was pleased and said 'O thou, practicer of good vows! Ask boon from Me.'

Thus ends the twenty third chapter on the killing of the enemy of Sudarśana in the great war, in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—installation of Durgā Devī in Benares

1. Vyāsa said: "Hearing the Devī's words, the king Subāhu began to say with great devotion thus:

2-3. 'O Devī! If there be made a comparison between the kingdom of the Devas and the world on the one hand, the vision of Thine on the other hand, then it must be acknowledged that the kingdom of the Devas and the earth cannot stand in comparison before Thee. O Devī! There cannot be anything in this *trilokī* that is more exalted than Thy vision; therefore, O Mother! What other boon may I ask from Thee? I am very thankful and blessed; all my desires are fulfilled when I have seen Thee.

4-5. O Auspicious Mother! I ask from You this boon: my desire that my devotion may remain constant, fixed, and unflinching towards You. O Mother! You would remain always in this city of mine being celebrated under the name of Śrī Durgā Devī, Your *śakti*. This is my desire.

6-9. O Devī! As You have cleared off all the obstacles of Sudarśana and saved him from this danger, so remain here in this city of Benares and protect it, so long as this city stands on the face of the earth; and make it firm, well-established and renowned. O Durgā, I pray that you may grant me these boons. O Devī! Grant me also various other desires of mine, destroy my enemies and extirpate all the irreligious and wicked people in this city. O Goddess of mercy! What more can I ask from you?'

10-11. Vyāsa said: "Thus praising and praying, the king Subāhu stood with folded hands before the Devī Durgā, the remover of all calamities, when She addressed him thus: 'O king! I will remain, no doubt, in this city of

Benares, the place of salvation, as long as it stands on the face of the earth, and protect all the people here.'

12. Then came there Sudarśana, heartily gladdened; and he bowed to Her and began to praise Her with intense joy and devotion.

13. 'O Mother of this Universe! Everyone in this world shows mercy to those that are devoted to him; but, O Mother! I see, in Your case, You take it as if Your bounden duty, to save even those that are void of any devotion towards You; for You have saved my life, though I am devoid of any devotion towards you. Therefore how can I describe the boundless ocean of mercy that reigns in You!

14. O Goddess! I have heard that You have created all this Universe with its elements, and You are preserving this Your own creations and again You will destroy it in due time. Therefore O Mother! What wonder is there that you have saved me!

15. O Goddess! Now order me early what work of Yours shall I do now? Where shall I go? O Mother! Now I am unable to make out my duty; therefore kindly order me whether I will remain here or go anywhere else or remain anywhere, I like, at my leisure?'

16. Vyāsa said: "On Sudarśana thus petitioning before the Devī, She said with much kindness: 'O good soul! Go to Ayodhyā and govern the country befitting your family.

17. O king! Constantly remember Me and worship Me with great care. I will always look after the welfare of your kingdom.

18. Especially in the eighth, fourteenth, and in the ninth day of the lunar half-month, worship Me according to the prescribed rites and rules and offer me sacrifices.

19. O sinless one! Establish my image in this city and worship it three times —morning, midday and evening—carefully and with devotion.

20. It is noteworthy that My Great Puja in autumn for the nine nights (Navarātra) ought to be done with the greatest devotion.

21-22. O king! In the months of Chaitra, Māgh, Āśvīn, and Āsādha, My Grand Festival should be done on the four Navarātris respectively; and especially on the fourteenth and on the eighth day of the dark fortnight, all persons ought to worship Me with their minds full of devotion towards Me.'

23. Vyāsa said: 'After the Devī, the Goddess Durgā, the Destroyer of all dangers, had finished Her sayings, Sudarśana bowed down to Her and praised Her much. The Devī, giving him the above-mentioned advice, disappeared.

24. Seeing Her disappear, all the kings went to Sudarśana and bowed to him as the Devas go to their lord, the Indra.

25. The king of Benares, Subāhu, too, gladly bowed down and stood before him. Then all the kings began to address Sudarśan, the king of Ayodhyā.

26. "O king! You are our lord and governor; we are always your servants; protect us as the king of Ayodhyā.

27. O king! It is through your grace only that we have seen the Supreme Force, the Goddess of this Universe, the most Auspicious, the Eternal Bhavānī, the Giver of the fourfold desires.

28. O king! It is for your sake that the Eternal, Highest Prakṛti Devī appeared; therefore you are very fortunate, auspicious, and most blessed in this world. Your have finished, as it were, all that you had to do.

29. O king! We all are deluded by the Māyā of that Mahā-māyā Caṇḍīkā Devī; therefore none of us is able to know Her prowess.

30. We are always engaged in thinking of wealth, sons and wives; there we are merged in this awful ocean of delusion, infested with crocodiles, etc., in the shape of lust, anger, greed, etc.

31. O Blessed one! You are highly enlightened and you know everything; hence we ask you What is this Force; whence has She sprung? How is Her prowess? Kindly describe all these to us.

32. O Descendant of Kakud! The saints are always merciful; kindly therefore relate to us the glory of the Excellent Goddess, that serves the purpose of a boat in crossing this ocean of world (transmigration).

33. O king! I am intensely desirous to hear the prowess and nature of the Devī.'

34. Vyāsa said: "When the kings had thus asked, the son of Dhruvasandhi, the king Sudaraśana became very glad and, meditating on the Goddess, began to say thus:

35. 'O kings! Indra and the other Devas, even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa, are unable to fathom the most exalted deeds of that Goddess; how, then, can I describe to you the great glory of the Mahā-māyā?

36-38. O kings! The Bhagavatī Bhavānī is present, as it were, being divided into four parts. She who is the first and foremost, the excellent *sāttvik* energy worshipped by all, is always engaged in the preservation of this world. That part which is engaged in creating this world is called the *rājasik* energy; and that part which is engaged in destroying the world is called the *tāmasik* energy, and that part which is the cause of all, Brahmā, etc., that Highest śakti, the Bestower of all desires, is called the fourth Śakti, the Nirgunā Śakti.

39. O kings! Those who are not *yogīs* will never be able to grasp the Nirgunā Śakti. The Sagunā Force can be easily served. All those *madhyama-*

adhikāris (fit persons) and learned men always meditate and worship Her Sagunā Aspect.'

40-41. The kings said: 'O king! You got afraid and went in your very early age to the forest; how is it, then, that you have been able to know the excellent Goddess Mahā-māyā? How did you worship and pray to Her, that She, becoming so glad, has favored you and so helped you?'

42-43. Sudarśan said: 'O kings! Early in my childhood, I got the excellent root-*mantra* of desires, *kāma-bīja* (*klīṁ*); daily I meditated and silently uttered that *mantram*. After that I came to realize that Eternal Auspicious Mother through the Ṛṣis; and since that time, day and night, I always used to remember that Highest Deity with the greatest devotion.'

44. Vyāsa said: "Hearing the words of Sudarśana, the kings came to know that the Goddess which they saw was the Highest Force; and filled with the greatest devotion towards Her, returned to their own homes.

45. The king of Benares, Subāhu, returned to his own city after bidding goodbye to Sudarśana. The virtuous Sudarśana, too, went towards his Kosala kingdom.

46. The ministers were very glad to hear the death of Śatrujit and to see the victory of Sudarśana.

47-48. The inhabitants and armies of Sākata (Ayodhyā) hearing that Sudarśana is coming, and knowing him to be the son of the king Dhruvasandhi, became highly delighted and approached to him with various offerings.

49-50. Sudarśana, with his new consort, arrived at Ayodhyā with his heart highly gladdened, and showed his due regard and respect towards all his subjects. Then the ministers came and sainted him; the women threw at him offerings of *lāja* (fried rice) and flowers; the bards began to praise

loudly. Thus, honored by various auspicious ceremonies, the king entered into his palace."

Here ends the 24th chapter on killing the enemies of Sudarśana, the appearance of Durgā Devī in the city of Benares and the return to Ayodhyā of Sudarśana in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXV—the installation of the Devī

1-4. Vyāsa said: "The king Sudarśana, surrounded by his friends, on coming to the palace at Ayodhyā, bowed down to Līlāvatī, the mother of Śatrujit, and said: 'O mother! I swear by touching your feet, that I have not killed in battle your son Śatrujit nor your father Yudhājit; it is the Devī Durgā that has killed them; I am not to be blamed a bit in this. O mother! You need not be sensitive in this; there is no remedy for what will inevitably come to pass; therefore you do not be sorry for the death of your son; you must know that the *jīvas* enjoy pleasure and pain as the results of their own *karmas*.

5. O mother! I am your servant; you are entitled to the same respect and worship as Manoramā, my own mother; there is no difference whatsoever between her and you.

6. O mother! One must bear the effects of one's *karma*, good or bad; therefore when pleasure or pain arises, you should not be glad or otherwise.

7. When pain arises, more pain is said to be conceived and when pleasure arises, more pleasure is seen. But the learned say that man ought not to subject himself to excessive pleasure or pain.

8. O mother! This whole world is under Fate, Destiny; nothing of it is ours. Therefore the intelligent persons ought not to grieve their hearts at any time with sorrow.

9. As the wooden dolls dance on a stage, controlled by the puppeteer, so the individual souls here work as the results of their past *karmas;* there is no doubt about this.

10. O mother! I know that the effect of one's own *karma* has to be borne; it is on that account, that I never felt sorrow in my exile in the forest.

11. You are quite aware that my mother's father was killed here, and my mother, becoming very much afraid and sorrowful, took me and escaped to the forest.

12-13. The robbers robbed us of everything save the clothes on our bodies; I was then very young; my mother was without any shelter; she carried me with this minister Vidalla and my helpless nurse to the hermitage of Bhāradvāja.

14. There the kind hermit and his wife and the other wives of the hermits protected our lives in that forest, with the roots and fruits that can be obtained there in that forest. Thus our time passed.

15. Mother! I had felt no pain then; nor do I feel any pleasure at present, when wealth is flowing unto me. What more to say, I have no feeling of jealousy or envy whatsoever in my mind.

16. O mother! Rather it is better, in my eyes, to subsist on roots and fruits than to enjoy kingdoms; for kings go to hell; but the ascetics living on roots and fruits never meet with that destiny.

17. The wise should undoubtedly practice *dharma*, control their passions, and thus save themselves from being led into hells.

18-19. O mother! The human birth in this auspicious Bhāratvarsa is seldom obtained. The enjoyments in eating and drinking are possible in every womb, but it is highly incumbent on us when we have got the privilege of this human birth, to earn *dharma*, leading to the Heavens and salvation, which can be very rarely attained in being born in other wombs.'

20-21. Vyāsa said: "When Sudarśana had told thus, Līlāvatī became very abashed; she cast aside the sorrow for the death of her son, told him with tears in her eyes: 'O my son Sudarśana! I am very much ashamed on account of my father Yudhājit killing your mother's father and taking hold of the sovereignty of this kingdom.

22. I could not then hinder my father and son; whatever unlawful evil and cruel deeds were then committed, all were done by my father Yudhājit. Therefore, my child, I am not to be made guilty in any way in these doings.

23. Both my father and son were killed out of the wickedness of their own actions; how can you account for those wicked things? Child! I am not expressing sorrow at the death of my son; I have been pained by his doings.

24-25. O noble-souled one; you are my son; Manoramā is my sister. Child! I am not at all offended with you, nor am I the least sorry for your obtaining the kingdom. Child! you are very fortunate; therefore you have obtained, by the grace of Bhagavatī, this kingdom without any enemies; now rule your subjects according to the prescribed rules of *dharma*.'

26-28. Vyāsa said: "O king! The king Sudarśana heard Līlāvatī and bowed down at her feet. Then he went to the beautiful palace where Manoramā had previously gone and began to live there. Inviting the ministers and the astrologers, he asked them what was the auspicious day and the auspicious moment that he can establish Durgā Devī on a beautiful golden throne and he would worship Her:

29. 'O ministers! First I will install on the throne the Devī, the Awarder of the four main objects of human pursuits (virtue, wealth, enjoyment and final beatitude) and then I will govern my kingdom like the kings Śrī Rāmacandra and others.

30. All the people of this city of Ayodhyā ought also to worship this Auspicious Śakti, the Highest Energy, the Giver of all desires and *siddhis*, and Who is respected and adored by all.'

31. On hearing his words, the ministers had a beautiful palace built by the engineers, artists and workmen and proclaimed in the city the king's proclamation.

32. Then the king Sudarśana had an image of the Devī nicely built and got Her installed with the help of the Paṇḍitas, versed in the *Vedas*, on an auspicious day and at an auspicious moment.

33. The intelligent king performed the worship and *homa* ceremony according to the prescribed rules, and thus finally settled the ceremony of invocation of the Deity into the new image and established Her as an idol in the temple.

34. O Janamejaya! There the soundings of the various drums and other musical instruments, the chanting of the Vedic *mantrams* by the Brahmāṇas, and sweet music were heard; and various sorts of festivities and rejoicings were celebrated.

35. Vyāsa said: "Thus completing the installation ceremony of Durgā Devī by the Brahmāṇas, versed in the *Vedas*, the king Sudarśana duly worshipped Her image in various ways.

36. Thus gaining his father's kingdom and worshipping the Devī, he and the Devī became celebrated throughout the kingdom.

37. The religious largehearted Sudarśana, on gaining his kingdom, brought all the other feudatory princes under his control by the sheer force of his religious character.

38. The subjects became happy and got honor in the reign of Sudarśana, as they got before in the reigns of Dilīp, Raghu and Rāmacandra.

39. The virtue of all the citizens under Varnāśrama shone complete with all its four *pādas;* and there remained none in the world irreligious.

40. In village after village, the chief townsmen began to build temples, worship the Goddess there with all jolliness. Thus the Devī worship spread everywhere in the Kosala kingdom.

41. On the other hand, the king Subāhu established the Devī in Benares, had temples built and worshipped Her there.

42. The inhabitants of Kāśī became then filled with devotion and intense love towards the Devī and duly worshipped Her, as they used to do to Śiva in the temple of Viśvanātha.

43. Thus the worship of Durgā Devī became very widely celebrated in this world. O king! Thus in different countries, the devotion began to increase towards the Goddess.

44. The Devī Bhagavatī Bhavānī became in every way an object to be worshipped and adored by all people everywhere in Bhāratavarṣa.

45. The people began to recite slowly, meditate, and chant hymns as advocated by the *āgamas* constantly, became deeply attached to the *śakti* worship and began to be looked upon with the highest honor by others.

46. O king! From that time all the people used to worship, perform *homa* ceremony and sacrifice duly in honor of the Devī in every Navarātri (for the first nine days of the bright half in the months of Āśvin and Caitra).

Here ends the 25th Chapter on the installation of the Devī in Ayodhyā and Benares in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVI—what is to be done in the Navarātri

1. Janamejaya said: "O Best of the Brahmāṇas! What are men to do in the time of Navarātra? Especially in the Navarātra ceremony during the autumnal season how is the ceremony to be performed? Kindly relate all this with the prescribed rules and regulations.

2. O intelligent one! What are the fruits therein of the Navarātra ceremony? and what are the rules to be observed? Kindly describe all these to me."

3-5. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hear about the vow of auspicious Navarātra. This has to be performed with loving devotion in the vernal season; but its special season is autumn. The two seasons, autumn and spring, are famous as the teeth of Yama, the God of Death; and these are the two seasons, very hard for the persons to cross over. Therefore every goodfaring man should everywhere perform this vow very carefully.

6-8. O king! The people are very much afflicted with various terrible diseases in these two seasons autumn and spring; many lose their lives during these portions of the year. Therefore the wise should unquestionably worship with great devotion the Caṇḍīkā Devī in these auspicious months of Chaitra and Āśvin.

9-11. On the day previous to the commencement of the vow, when the *amāvasyā-tithi* (New Moon) commences, one should collect the materials that will be required in the worship and should eat only once in that tithi what is called *havisyānna* (sacred food, boiled rice with ghee) and should on that day prepare an open shade in a temporary building, twenty-four feet in dimensions, on a level piece of ground, that is considered holy; it is to be equipped with a post and a flag. Next, this is to be heaped over with yellow

earth and cow dung. Then a raised platform called the *vedī*, six feet wide and one and a half foot high, level and hard, is to be erected, and provided with an excellent space thereon for the seat of the Devī. Provisions are to be made also for ornamented gateways and an awning over the top.

12-17. One should invite then, those Brahmāṇas who fully observe the customs and usages, who are self-restrained and versed in the *Vedas* and *Vedāngas*, especially those who are skilled in the ceremony of worshipping the Devī.

Next, in the *pratipad-tithi* (the first day of the bright half), one should take one's morning ablutions in a river, in a lake, tank or a well, or in one's own residence, according to rules, and one should perform one's everyday practices of *sandhyā-vandanam*. Afterwards he should appoint the Brahmāṇas and give them water for washing their feet, *arghya* (offerings of grass, rice, etc.) and *madhuparka* (an oblation of honey and milk, etc.) and give them clothing and ornaments, as his means permit. If he happens to be rich, he should never show miserliness here in making these gifts; for if the Brahmāṇas be satisfied, they will try their best to make the ceremony a complete success.

O king! The Caṇḍī *paths* (the reading of the book called Caṇḍī) and Bhāgavata *paths* (the reading of some portions of the book named Bhāgavat) are done on this occasion, for the satisfaction of the Goddess; and either nine Brahmāṇas or five or three or at least one Brahmāṇa should be appointed for the purpose. Moreover one other Brahmāṇa, of a restrained and calm nature, is to be appointed who would observe the fasting on the day previous (*pārāyana*). All these being done, the able man is to perform the ceremony preparatory to the solemn Devī worship, (in which the priest utters the Vedīc *mantra svasti-vāhana:*

svasti na indro vriddhaśravāḥ |
svasti naḥ pūṣhā viśva-vedāḥ |
svasti nastārkṣhyo ariṣhta-nemiḥ |
svasti no brihaspatir-dadhātu | |

oṁ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ hariḥ oṁ

āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ dūm dūrgāyai namaḥ is the nine-lettered Dūrgā *mantra*.

18-20. O king! When the ceremony has been thus commenced, one should place on the *vedī* the throne fitted with double silken clothes; and, on that throne, he should place the image of the Devī. The Devī, the Eternal World-Mother, is to be four-armed or eighteen armed, fully provided with all the weapons, ornamented with garlands of pearls and jewels, decorated with various ornaments of gems and precious stones, wearing excellent heavenly clothing, all the parts of the image being artistically finished and endowed with all the auspicious signs, mounted on a lion, and holding conchshell, wheel, club, and lotus in Her hands.

21-22. In the absence of the image, one should place an earthen water-pot on that throne, thoroughly purified by the Vedīc *mantras*, filled with gold and jewels, and filled fully with water brought from a sacred river or a sacred place of pilgrimage and with five young shoots of plants, the extremities of branches bearing new leaves immersed in water. Beside the water-pot on the throne, there should be a *yantra* (symbol) with the nine-lettered *mantram* (*āūṁ hṛīṁ śrīṁ Caṇḍīkāyai namaḥ*) in it for the purpose of worship.

23. One should place by one's side all the materials of worship in their due places, and then have the music and other sounding drums played, for the good fortune and prosperity of the family.

Note: Look for the *mantras* in the book *Mantramaho Dadhi*.

24. O king! If the first day be the *nandā-tithi* (i.e., the first day of the bright fortnight) with the *nakṣatra* (asterism) Hastā in the ascendant, then that is the best time for worshipping duly the Holy Goddess. There is no doubt that special fortunate results would arise from this.

25. On the previous night one should observe fasting, or on the previous day one should take only one meal of *havisyānna* (boiled rice and ghee); and on the next day one should make a *sankalpa* (an avowal of the purpose to perform a rite) and then begin worship.

26. One should pray before the Goddess thus, 'O Mother, Mother of the World! I will perform this excellent Navarātra vow; be pleased to help me in every respect.'

27. One is to observe, as far as possible, all the rules enjoined in this vow and then utter the *mantras* and do the worship according to the prescribed rules.

28-31. First of all, one should worship duly the Goddess Jagaddhātri, presenting Her *candana* (sandalwood paste), *aguru* (a fragrant wood, the aloe wood), camphor, the flowers Mandāra (one of the five trees of the celestial regions), Karaja (a kind of fragrant flower) Aśoka, Campaka, Karavir, Mālatī, and Brāhmī and various lovely sweet scented flowers and good Bel leaves, Dhūpa (incense) and lamps. Next one should present the fruits coconut, Mātuliṅga, pomegranate, bananas, oranges, jackfruit, Bel and various other delicious fruit and then, offering Her *arghya*, present boiled rice and other food with a heart full of devotion.

32. Those who eat meat can sacrifice animals in this worship of the Devī; and for this purpose, goat and wild boars are the best.

33-34. O sinless one! The goats, etc., offered as a sacrifice before the Devī attain to unending heavens. Therefore persons offering the sacrifices of goats do not incur any sin. O king! The goats, etc., and other beasts offered as a sacrifice before the Devas undoubtedly go to the heavenly regions; therefore, in all the *śāstras*, it has been decided that this killing of animals in a sacrifice is considered as non-killing.

35. Now, for doing the *homa* ceremony one should prepare, according to one's requirements, a triangular pit from one to ten hands in dimension and a triangular level piece of ground covered with sand.

36. Daily, thrice, one should worship the Devī with various lovely articles and finally make a great festivity with dancing, singing and music.

37. Everyday he should sleep on the ground and worship the virgins (young girl from the age of two to the age of ten) with nectar-like sweetmeats, beautiful clothing and ornaments.

38. Every day one virgin or increased by one, two, or three every day or nine virgins in all the days respectively are to be worshipped.

39. O king! One should perform worshipping this *kumārī-pūjā* for the satisfaction of the Devī, as his means allow; never one is to show miserliness in this.

40. O king! Hear the rules of the virgin worship that I am going to tell you. The virgin, aged one year, is not to be worshipped; for they are quite ignorant as to smelling and tasting various delicious things.

41-43. The virgin aged two years is named the Kumārī; aged three years is named the Trimurtī; four years, is called the Kalyānī; five years, Rohinī; six years, Kālikā; seventh year, Caṇḍīkā; eighth year, Śāmbhavī; ninth year, Dūrgā; and a virgin, aged ten years, is called Subhadrā. Virgins aged more than ten years are not allowed.

44. One should worship these virgins, taking their names and observing all the rules. I am now mentioning the different results that arise from the worship of these nine classes of virgins.

45. The worship of Kumārī leads to the extinction of miseries and poverty, to the extirpation of one's enemies and the increment of riches, longevity and power.

46. The Trimurtī-*pūjā* yields longevity, and the acquisition of the three things—*dharma*, wealth and desires—the coming of riches, sons and grandsons.

47. Those who want learning, victory, kingdom and happiness should worship the Kalyānī, the fructitier of all desires.

48-49. Men should worship Rohinī duly for the cure of diseases. For the destruction of enemies, the worship of the Kālikā with devotion is the best. For prosperity and riches, Caṇḍīkā is to be worshipped with devotion. O king! For the enchanting and overpowering of one's enemies, for the removal of miseries and poverty, and for victory in battles, Śāmbhavī worship is the best.

50-51. For the destruction of awfully terrible enemies and for happiness in the next world, the worship of Dūrgā is the safest and best. People worship Subhadrā when they want their desires to be fulfilled.

52. People should, with great devotion, worship the Kumārīs (virgins) with the mantram "Śrīrastu" or other *mantrams* beginning with Śrī, or with the seed-*mantrams*.

53. The Goddess who can create without any difficulty all the sacred *tattvas* of the Kumār Kārtikeya and who effects, as if in sport, the creation of all the Devas, Brahmā and others—I am worshiping the same Kumārī Devī.

54. She who is appearing under the three forms as differentiated by the three *guṇas—sāttva, rājas* and *tāmas*—and who is appearing in multiple forms owing to the differentiations of the three *guṇas* again into various minor differences, I am worshipping Her, the Trimūrtī Devī.

55. She who being worshipped always fares us with auspicious things, I am worshipping Her, with devotion, the Kumārī Kalyānī, the awarder of all desires.

56. I am worshipping the Rohinī Devī with a heart full of devotion, who is germinating all the *karmas* that have accumulated owing to past deeds in seed forms.

57. She who, at the end of a *kalpa* gathers unto Her in the form of Kālī all this Universe, moving and unmoving, I worship that Kālikā Devī with devotion.

58. She, who is furious and wrathful and hence is called Caṇḍīkā and who killed the two Demons Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa, I bow down to Her humbly with devotion, to that Caṇḍīkā Devī who destroys the terrible sins.

59. I worship that Śāmbhavī Devī, the giver of all pleasures and happiness, whose form is the *Veda* Brahman, and whose origin is without any cause, and who is so recited in the *Vedas*.

60. She who saves her devotees from danger, and who always delivers from various difficulties and troubles, Whom all the Devas are incapable to know, I worship with devotion that Dūrgā Devī, the destroyer of all calamities.

61. I, with my mind devoted, offer my salutations to that Subhadrā Devī, Who procures all auspiciousness to Her devotees and removes all inauspicious incidents.

62. Thus, with the *mantrams* above described, people should always worship the virgin girls, giving them clothing, ornaments, garlands, scents, and various other articles."

Here ends the 26th Chapter on the narration of what are to be done in the Navarātri in the MahāPurāṇam in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVII—the virgins fit to be worshipped

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! Those Kumārīs who are defective in limbs, who are lepers, who are filled with sores and ulcers over their bodies, whose bodies emit offensive smell or whose bodies are polluted, or those who are of a bad family are never to be accepted for worship in the Navarātra ceremony festival.

2-3. Those who are born blind, who are squint-eyed, who are blind in one eye, of disgraceful appearance, whose bodies are overgrown with hair, who are diseased or who are in their menstruation or with any other signs indicating passionate youthful tendencies, or those who are very lean and thin, or born of widows, or of women unmarried are always to be avoided in this *pūjā*.

4. O king! It is only the healthy, graceful, beautiful, without any ulcers, and who are not bastards, those virgins are to be selected for the Kumārī Pūjā.

5. In all the cases, the Kumārīs born of the Brahmāṇa families, can be taken; when victory is desired, the Kumārīs of the Kṣatriya families are preferred; when profit is wanted, the Vaiśya Kumārīs and, when general welfare is wanted, the Śūdra Kumārīs are to be taken.

6-7. O king! In the Navarātri Pūjā, the Brahmāṇas should select for worship the Brahmāṇa Kumārīs; Kṣatriyas, Brahmāṇa or Kṣatriya; the Vaiśya worshippers can select for worship Brahmāṇa, Kṣatriya, or Vaiśya Kumārīs. And the Śūdra worshippers can select any of the four classes for worship. But artists and artisans should select for worship the Kumārīs from their own families and tribes respectively.

8. If persons become unable to worship on all the days, then it is advised that they should perform the special worship on the eighth day (*astamī-tithi*).

9-10. In ancient times, on the eighth day, Bhadra Kāli Goddess, the destroyer of the sacrifice started by Dakṣa, appeared on that day in hideous forms, surrounded by hundreds and *lakhs* of *yogīnīs* (one of a class of sixty goddesses or female attendants on Kāli). Therefore one should worship in particular on the eighth day with scents, garlands, and pastes and various offerings.

11. On this day, *pāyasa* (a food prepared of rice, milk and sugar), and fresh fish are to be specially offered to the Deity. The *homa* ceremonies, feasting of the Brahmāṇas, and the worship of the Mother Goddess are done with various offerings, fruits and flowers, and in good quantities.

12. O king! Those who are unable to observe the fasting in this Navarātra Pūjā, will reap the same fruits if they observe fasting for the three days only: the Saptamī, Astamī, and Navamī *tithis*.

13. On the seventh, eighth, and ninth days, in these three *tithis* (lunar days) if one worships with devotion, one will acquire all the merit.

14. When the Devī's worship, *homa*, Kumārī worship and feasting of the Brahmāṇas all are done, know that the Navarātri Pūjā is completed.

15. O Janamejaya! No worship or vow or charitable gifts extant in this world can be compared, as regards their meritorious effects, with this Navarātra Pūjā.

16. On observing this Navarātram Vrata, one gets riches, crops, sons and grandsons, prosperity and happiness, longevity, health, heaven and even the final beatitude (*mokṣa*).

17. Those who are desirous of learning, riches, or sons will get them all if they perform this most auspicious Navarātra ceremony, able to confer fortunes on the devotees.

18. On the performance of this sacrifice, those who want learning get all learning; and he, who is deprived of his kingdom will get back all his kingdom.

19. Those who did not, in their previous births, perform this meritorious vow, become diseased, poor and devoid of sons in their present births.

20. Those women that are barren, or widows or devoid of sons, infer that they never performed this sacrifice in their previous births.

21. Those who have not performed the Navarātra ceremony, how can they acquire riches in this world and acquire happiness and peace in the next?

22. He who has worshipped the Goddess Bhagavatī Bhavānī Devī with young leaves of the Bel tree, besmeared with red sandal paste, it is he that will undoubtedly become a king in this world.

23. That man who has failed to worship the Goddess of the whole universe, Who fructifies all the pursuits of human life, Who destroys all troubles, pains and miseries, Who is all suspicious Bhagavatī Bhavānī, that fellow is sure to pass his days in this world wretched, impoverished, and surrounded by his enemies on all sides.

24. When Hari, Hara, Brahmā, Indra, Agṇi, Varuṇa, Kuvera, and the Sun, all these possessing all wealth and powers, and filled with the highest felicity, meditate constantly the Goddess of the universe, Who is All Existence Intelligence, and Bliss, then what to speak of the human beings! How is it that persons do not worship that Caṇḍīkā Devī, the One Who leads all human pursuits to success!

25-26. Why should not the people worship the Goddess Bhavānī, the bestower of all happiness, whose other names are Svahā and Svadhā, the *mantrams* under whose intrinsic energies the Devas and the Pitṛs always get satisfied, and which are recited by all the Munis when they chant in every sacrifice the Vedic *mantrams?* Under Whose Will power Brahmā the

Creator, creates all this Universe? Under Whose energy, Viṣṇu Janāradan, the Deva of the Devas, incarnates in this earth in various forms and preserves this world, and under Whose power Śaṅkara destroys this whole Universe?

27. Nobody in this whole universe, can have his existence without having recourse to that Prakṛti Devī, the *śakti* incarnate; be he a Devī, a human being or a bird, or a serpent, Gandharva, Rākṣasa, Piśācha, a mountain or a tree, he cannot move even of his own accord, without the help of this Force.

28. Therefore, why should not anybody worship that Caṇḍīkā Devī, the Awarder of all desires and wealth? And how is it that a man desiring one of the objects of human pursuits—*dharma*, wealth, desires and the final beatitude—observes not the vow regarding that Deity.

29. So much so, that even a man who has committed a heinous offence, five such are enumerated—killing a Brahmāṇa, drinking liquor, stealing gold, adultery with the wife of a spiritual guide associating with any such person —if he performs the Navarātra vow, he will be absolved entirely from all such sins; there is no doubt about this.

30. O king! Once on a time there lived in the country of Kosala a trader, poor and miserable, having under him many relations and dependants in his family, for whom he had to provide.

31. He had many sons and daughters; when they were very hungry and distressed, then they used to get a little food and that in the evening, only once in twenty-four hours.

32. That trader, too, worked under another the whole day; and when it was evening, he used also to take his meals. Thus, being very much anxious and distressed, he maintained his family members somehow or other.

33-34. This trader was of a quiet temper, of a good conduct, truthful, always ready to act religiously, devoid of anger, steady and contented, void

of vanity and jealousy; daily he used to worship the Devas, Pitṛs, and the guests, and used to take his meals after all his family members had taken their meals.

35-36. Thus many days passed away when that good trader, named Suśīla, being very much perplexed with poverty and hunger, asked a quiet-tempered Brahmāṇa: 'O Bhūdeva! (deva incarnate on the earth) kindly tell me positively how this state of poverty can be got rid of!

37. O holy minded! Kindly advise me such as preserves my honor; I do not want wealth, nor do I like to be a rich man; O Brahmāṇa! I want just enough to meet with the expenses incurred in maintaining my family; please advise so that I may be able to earn this much only.

38. I have many sons; I have not got any food, sufficient enough to give them even a handful of rice.

39. Alas! My youngest son was crying today for food; I have driven him out of the house by chastising him. O Brahmāṇa! What am I do? I have got no wealth; my heart is burning with grief and sorrow; my baby has gone out of the house, weeping and hungry.

40. My daughter has come to a marriageable age; I have no money. Her age has exceeded ten years; the marriageable age limit has been exceeded. Alas! What am I to do?

41-42. O Brahmāṇa! I am expressing my sorrow for all that. You are merciful and all-knowing; tell me any means, be it asceticism, gifts, vow, or the reciting of any *mantrams* by which I can maintain my family; I want wealth just sufficient for that purpose and nothing more.

43. O high-minded one! Kindly devise and tell me some means by which my family members become happy in this world.'

44-46. Vyāsa said: "The Brahmāṇa that used to practice vows when thus asked by the trader told him gladly: 'O trader! Do now the the most

auspicious Navarātri vow, and worship the Bhagavatī, perform *homa*, and feast the Brahmāṇas. Have the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* recited, and recite then slowly the *śakti-mantram* and try, as much as you can, to do other concomitant ceremonies; and your desires will thus be undoubtedly fulfilled.

47. There is no other vow superior to this in this world; this vow is very holy and will bring unto you happiness.

48. This vow leads to wisdom and liberation; destroys enemies and increases posterity and prosperity.

49. In former days, Śrī Rāmacandra suffered very much owing to his being deprived of his kingdom; and, then on account of his wife being stolen away. Subsequently he performed this Navarātra vow in Kiskindhyā, his heart being heavily laden with grief.

50. Though troubled very much on account of the bereavement of Sītā, still Rāmacandra observed the Navarātra Vow and worshipped the Goddess according to the prescribed rules and rites.

51-52. As a fruit of this worship he was able to bridge the great ocean and kill the giant Kumbhakarṇa, Meghanāda, Rāvaṇa's son, and Rāvaṇa, the king of Lanka; and subsequently he was able to recover his Sītā. He installed Vibhīsana on the throne of Lanka (Ceylon) and at last returned to Ayodhyā and reigned there without any enemies.

53. O best of the Vaiśyas! Rāmacandra, of incomparable prowess, was able to obtain happiness in this world on account of the influence of this Navarātra ceremony.'

54-55. Vyāsa said: "O king! That Vaiśya, hearing thus the Brahmāṇa's words, made him his *guru*, was initiated by him in the seed-*mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ*) and ceaselessly, without any laziness, recited slowly the *mantram* for nine nights; and worshipped the Devī with great caution and with various

offerings. Thus for nine consecutive years he devoted himself to the *japa* (reciting slowly) of the seed-*mantra* of Māyā till at last, when the ninth year was completed, the Great Goddess appeared distinctly before his eyes on the night of the great *Astamī-tithi* (the eighth day of the bright half), gave him various boons, delivered the Vaiśya from poverty and bestowed on him wealth and his other desired things."

Here ends the 27th Chapter on the virgins fit to be worshipped and the Glory of the Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa in the Third Adhyāya.

Chapter XXVIII—incidents connected with Navarātri

1. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! How did Rāmacandra celebrate the Devī's Pūjā that leads to happiness? Who was He? And how was His Sītā stolen away? How was He deprived of His kingdom? Please satisfy me by narrating all these incidents to me."

2. Vyāsa said: "O king! There lived, in days of yore in the city of Ayodhyā, a prosperous king of the solar dynasty named Daśaratha. He always worshipped the Devas and Brahmāṇas.

3-5. He had four celebrated sons: Rāma, Lakṣmana, Bharata and Satrughna. These four sons were equally learned and beautiful, and they always did actions agreeable to the king. Of these, Rāmacandra was the son of the Queen Kauśalya, Bharata was the son of Kaikeyī, and the good-looking Lakṣmana and Satrughna were the twin sons of Sumitrā. While young, they learned the art of archery and began to play with bows and arrows in their hands.

6-7. Thus educated and purified, the four sons began to give delight more and more to the king; one day the Maharṣi Viśvāmitra came to Ayodhyā and aked from the king Daśaratha the help of his son Rāmacandra for the

protection of his sacrificial ceremonies. The king could not cancel the Viśvāmitra's request, and sent with him Rāma, accompanied by Lakṣmana.

8-11. The lovely Rāma and Lakṣmana accompanied the Muni on his way back. There lived a terrible-looking Rākṣasī named Tādakā in a forest on their way, who used to give great troubles to the ascetics; Rāma killed her with only one arrow. Next he killed Subāhu and shot arrows at another night-wanderer Mārīcha and made him senseless, almost dead and threw him at a great distance, and thus saved Viśvāmitra from all the obstacles troubling him in his sacrificial ceremonies. Thus fulfilling the great work, protecting the sacrificial ceremonies, Rāma, Lakṣmana and the Muni Kausika started for the kingdom of Mithilā. On his way, Rāmacandra rescued Ahalyā from the curse that she was suffering from.

12-13. At last the two brothers, accompanied by the Muni, reached the city Videhanagar. Just at this time the king Janaka of Ayodhyā made a vow to give in marriage Sītā to anybody who will be able to break the bow of Śiva; Rāma broke that bow into two and married Sītā, born of Lakṣmī's parts. The king Janaka gave in marriage to Lakṣmana his own daughter Urmilā.

14. The good and auspicious Bharata and Satrughna married respectively Māndavi and Śrutakīrti, the two daughters of Kuśadhvaja.

15. O king! Thus, in the great city of Mithilā, the four brothers performed their marriage ceremonies according to the prescribed rules and rites.

16. The king Daśaratha, then seeing Rāma well qualified to take charge of the kingdom, proposed to install him on the throne of Ayodhyā.

17. The queen Kaikeyī, seeing that various articles were being collected for the installation of Rāma, asked for the two boons, promised before from her husband Daśaratha, who was completely under her control.

18. The first request was her own son, Bharata's becoming the king of Ayodhyā; and the second request was the banishing of Rāma to the forest for fourteen years.

19. Thus Rāmacandra went accompanied by Sītā and Lakṣmana to the Daṇḍakā forest, frequented by the Rākṣasas.

20. The high-souled king Daśaratha felt very much due to bereavement of his son, remembered the curse given to him by Andhaka Muni and left his mortal coil.

21. Bharata, seeing that his father died solely on account of his mother, refrained from becoming the king of Ayodhyā, the prosperous city and wanted the welfare of his brother Rāma.

22. Rāmacandra went to the forest Pañchavatī. One day the youngest sister of Rāvaṇa, named Sūrpanakhā became very passionate and came to Rāma; whereon Rāmacandra disfigured her by cutting off her nose and ears.

23. Seeing her nose thus cut away, the Rākṣasas Khara, Dūsana, and others fought very hard against the powerful Rāmacandra.

24. The truly powerful Rāma killed Khara, Dūsana and all other powerful Rākṣasas for the welfare of the Munis.

25. Then Sūrpanakhā went to Laṅkā and informed Rāvaṇa of her nose having been cut and of the death of Khara, Dūsana and others.

26. The wicked and malignant Rāvaṇa, hearing of their death, became filled with anger and mounting on a chariot, quickly went to the forest of Mārīcha.

27. Rāvaṇa expressed his desire to take away Sītā; so he ordered that magician Mārīcha to assume the form of a golden deer, go to Rāma and entice him away.

28. The magician Mārīcha assumed the form of a golden deer and reached the sight of Jānakī. Then that variously spotted deer began to move about near Sītā Devī.

29. Looking at the beautiful splendor of the body of that golden deer, Sītā Devī, prompted as it were by the great Fate, spoke to Rāmacandra like an independent woman, 'O Lord! Bring me the skin of the deer.'

30. Rāma too, not judging at all, as if it was the work of Destiny, asked Lakṣmana to remain there and protect Sītā, took hold of his bows and arrows, and went after the deer.

31. Infinitely skilled in magic, the deer seeing Hari in the shape of Rāma sometimes came and sometimes came not within his sight and travelled from one forest to another.

32. When Rāma saw that He had come very far away from His place, He became angry, drew his bow and shot sharp arrows at that deer, the transformed Mārīcha.

33. The deceitful conjuror Rākṣasa, being thus shot very violently and pained intensely, cried out "O brother Lakṣmana! I am killed" and breathed his last.

34-35. This loud awful cry reached Jānakī's ears. She took that voice for Rāma's voice and told to Lakṣmana in a grieved tone 'Lakṣmana, go quickly. I fear Rāma is killed; hear the voice "O Lakṣmana! come quickly and deliver me" is calling you to go there.'

36. Lakṣmana then replied 'Mother! You are alone in this forest; therefore I cannot leave you thus even if Rāmacandra be killed.

37. O daughter of Janaka! Rāma has ordered me to remain here. Now if I leave you and go elsewhere, then I will be charged with having disobeyed his order. Fearing that, I am unable to leave this place.

38. It seems to me, moreover, that some magician has carried Rāma away from here; I am therefore unable to move a step from here and leave you alone.

39. Hold patience, let me consider; I find no such man as can kill Rāma; I am unable to leave you by any means alone here and to go away, disobeying Rāma's order.'

40. Vyāsa said: "O king! Then the young wife of Rāma, having handsome teeth, began to cry aloud, fearfully, as if made to do so by Destiny, and uttered the cruel words to the pure Lakṣmana.

41. 'O son of Sumitrā! I know why you are so much attached to me! I know very well that you have been sent here by Bharata to accompany us simply to obtain me.

42. O vile Kṣatriya, skilled in magic! I am not that sort of woman acting to my wanton will; never I will accept you of my will as my husband in case Śrī Rāmacandra be dead.

43. In case Śrī Rāma does not return, I will certainly commit suicide; without him I would be very much grieved and afflicted with sorrows; and I would not be able to hold on my life.

44. O Saumitrī! Whether you remain here or do not remain, I won't request anything more to you; for I am quite unaware of your mind; but this much I like to say to you, where has your intimacy towards your religious elder brother now gone?'

45-46. Hearing thus the Sītā Devī's words, Lakṣmana became exceedingly sorry; and, being suffocated with heaving sighs on account of the internal pain told Sītā 'O! One born from without any womb! Why are you uttering such cruel and malignant words; I clearly see when you are speaking such unworthy words, that some great evil is sure to befall on you very soon.'

47. O king! Thus saying, the spirited Lakṣmana left Sītā and went out weeping very much, and, being very much afflicted with grief, traced the footsteps of his elder and went on in search of him.

48. When Lakṣmana thus departed, Rāvaṇa entered into the hermitage in the guise of a deceitful beggar Bhikṣu wearing red robes.

49. Jānakī took that villain Rāvaṇa to be a *yogī* and respectfully gave him offerings of worship and forest fruits.

50-52. That villain asked Sītā humbly, in a gentle tone, 'O beautiful! Your eyes are beautiful like Palāsa lotus leaves; therefore it seems that you are not an ordinary woman; how is it that you are here thus alone in a wild forest? O fair one! Who is your father? who is your brother and who is your husband? Being such a beautiful one, how is it that you are in this forest here like an ordinary woman, dumbfounded? O good looking one! You are worthy to live in a palace filled with nectar; why are you living, in this hovel, in this wild forest like an ordinary Muni's wife, when your beauty is shining in lustrous beams like a Deva girl?'

53-55. Vyāsa said: "The daughter of Jānakī, hearing the words of Rāvaṇa, the husband of Mandodarī, unfortunately took him to be a good *yogī* and replied in the following way: 'Perhaps you have heard that a prosperous king Daśaratha is reigning in the Ayodhyā city. He has four sons; the eldest of these, Śrī Rāmacandra, is my husband. The king offered two boons to Kaikeyī, due to which Rāmacandra has been exiled in this forest and is with his brother Lakṣmana.

56. I am the daughter of the King Janaka; my name is Sītā; Rāmacandra has broken the bow of Śiva and has married me.

57. Resting under his prowess of arms, I am resting here fearlessly in this wild forest; seeing a golden deer, he has gone out to kill that for me.

58. Lakṣmana, too, hearing his voice has gone just now. O Yogī! I am living here depending on the strength of these two brothers.

59. Thus I have told you all about our living in this forest; shortly they will come and worship you duly.

60-61. The man who has controlled his passions and has become a Yati is like Viṣṇu incarnate; therefore I have worshipped you. O Yogī! Our *āśram* is in the midst of this terrible forest, surrounded by Rākṣasas. Therefore I am asking you how is it that you have been able to come here in this dress of Tridaṇḍī (a Sannyāsī Yogī); please speak in the name of Truth before me.'

62. Rāvaṇa said: 'O askance looking one! I am the king of Laṅkā, the husband of Mandodarī. O beautiful one! it is for you that I have put on this dress of Yati.

63. O beautiful! My two brothers Khara and Dūsana have been killed in this forest; and being urged by my sister I have come here.

64-65. Now leave your man-husband, residing in the forest as a pauper, devoid of fortune and wealth; and worship me as a husband. O fair one! I am Rāvaṇa, the king of kings; you now become my lord.

66. O daughter of Janaka! I am the lord of the Regents of the quarters; and yet I bow my head down to your lotus feet; better accept me and fulfil my desires today.

67-68. Formerly I asked for you from your father, king Janaka; but he then said, that he had laid a pledge, 'Whoever will break Śiva's bow will marry my daughter.' The Bhagvān Rudra is my *guru;* hence I feared to break his bow, and therefore I was not present in your *svayaṁvara*. But from that time my mind is always thinking of you and is in a state of bereavement for you.

69. O beautiful one! Hearing now that you are residing in this forest, I, impelled by my previous fascination for you, have now come hither; and you better now crown my labor with success.'

Thus ends the 28th Chapter on the incidents connected with the Navarātri and the description of Rāmāyānam in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa in the 3rd Adhyāya.

Note: The story about the origin of Sītā Devī runs thus: Rāvaṇa, the king of Ceylon (Laṅkā) practiced very severe austerities and got extraordinary powers. He brought the three worlds under his subjection, levied taxes from all. The Devas and all the other inhabitants of the several worlds paid their taxes, as imposed by Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa sent messengers to the Ṛṣis and the Munis, the ascetics, dwelling in forests and asked them to pay their taxes. The Ṛṣis replied that they had no property. But Rāvaṇa insisted. The Ṛṣis gave, then, blood, cutting their thighs, in a jar that was carried to Laṅkā. Rāvaṇa kept that jar under the custody of his queen Mandodarī, and instructed her that the jar contained poison and that she should not eat that. Mandodarī, however, ate a portion of that, out of curiosity, and became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter. Fearing Rāvaṇa, she floated the jar with the daughter, in the ocean, which, floating through oceans and rivers, came and touched the lands of the King Janaka. The peasants while tilling, found that and took the girl to the king, who reared her as his daughter. Thus Sītā, born out of the blood of the Brahmāṇas, took away subsequently the kingdom, life, and all of Rāvaṇa.

Another version is this: As before, the messengers advised the Munis to give something; otherwise Rāvaṇa would insist and put them to various troubles. So the Munis cut their thighs and gave blood as their tax, saying that that blood in the jar would cause ruin and desolation to the country where it will be kept. Rāvaṇa, hearing this, ordered the jar to be carried to the kingdom of the king Janaka, thus causing ruin to him. The jar was brought and placed in the fields of Janaka.

Now it happened that there was a very severe drought; rains were absolutely wanting; and a dire famine was imminent. The Brahmāṇa Paṇḍitas informed the king that if the king and his wife ploughed themselves the fields, rains would fall. So the king with his wife did that,

the king holding the plough and the queen holding the hand of the king. The fore end of the plough accidentally hit upon that jar, out of which came out Sītā Devī with two women Riddhi and Siddhi, waving chowries on her two sides. The two ladies disappeared and Sītā Devī looked like a girl. The king Janaka reared her, as if his daughter. Sītā Devī used to lift daily with her left hand the bow of Śiva, kept in the king's house, and daily worshipped that, and thus cleansed the place. Seeing this, the king Janaka pledged the vow that, whoever would break the Śiva's bow, would marry Sītā.

Here ends the 28th Chapter on the virgins fit to be worshipped and the Glory of the Devī in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa in the Third Adhyāya.

Chapter XXIX—the stealing of Sītā

1-2. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these vicious words, Jānakī became very much confounded with fear and began to tremble; somehow collecting herself she began to say: 'O descendant of the family of Pulastya! Why are you, prompted by lust, uttering these sinful words? I am born of the family of Janaka; therefore I cannot act wantonly according to my own inclination.

3. O ten-faced one! Better you go to Laṅkā quickly; else Rāmacandra will take away your life; you will no doubt incur death for my sake.'

4-5. Thus saying, Sītā Devī went towards the sacred fire called Gārhapatya, placed in the house, with words 'Go away; go away,' in her mouth. He, whose wickedness has caused all the *lokas* cry out 'Save! Save!' the same Rāvaṇa of perverted intellect, then assumed his real form, went towards the hut and caught hold of Sītā Devī who was crying, bewildered with fear.

6. Sītā cried 'Rāma! Rāma! Lakṣmana!' but the sinful Rāvaṇa caught hold of her and quickly mounting her on the chariot, fast got away.

7-9. On the way Jatāyu, the son of Aruna, met Rāvaṇa; and a terrible fight then ensued between the two, when the evil-minded Rāvaṇa, the king of the Demons, killed Jatāyu. Rāvaṇa carried Sītā to Laṅkā. Then Sītā cried like a forlorn deer and Rāvaṇa kept her in the Aśoka forest (Jaffna), surrounded and guarded by the Rākṣasīs. The king of Laṅkā tempted Sītā with comforting words and kingdoms, etc., but she never swerved from her own pure and stainless chastity.

10-12. On the other side, Rāmacandra after killing the deer and taking it was coming back calmly, when he saw Lakṣmana going to him and said 'O Lakṣmana! What a great blunder you have committed! Hearing the voice of that villain conjurer, how is it that you have left my dear Sītā alone and come here!' Lakṣmana said: 'O Lord! Being pierced sharply by Sītā Devī's words coming like sharpened arrows, and being driven away by her under the guidance of the Inevitable Destiny as it were, I have come here; there is no doubt about this.'

13. They, then, both hurriedly went to their hut made of leaves; and there not finding Sītā, they were very much afflicted with sorrows and went in quest of Jānakī.

14. Rāma and Lakṣmana in their search for Sītā, came at last to the spot where Jatāyu, the king of birds, was lying on the surface of the earth, with his life ultimately on the point of parting away from his body.

15-16. Jatāyu said: 'Rāvaṇa, the king of Laṅkā, carried away today stealthily Sītā Devī; I resisted that villain who then fought with me on that account and threw me down on this spot by weapons.' Thus saying, the king of birds died; whereupon Rāmacandra performed the burning of his dead body as well his funeral ceremonies. Then both of them went out of that place.

17. Then the Lord Rāmacandra killed Kabandha and freed him from his curse; and through his advice, he made friendship with Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys, and was thus bound under a tie.

18. Next Rāma killed the hero Balī as a duty and gave the excellent kingdom of Kiskindhyā to his new friend Sugrīva according to his promise.

19. Then, he began to ceaselessly think of the stealing away of Sītā by Rāvaṇa and passed away the four months of the rainy season there with his brother Lakṣmana.

20. Rāma, being very much shaken on account of the bereavement of Sītā, began to address Lakṣmana thus: ’O Saumitre! The desires of the daughter of the king of Kekaya are now fulfilled.

21. Jānakī will no more be obtained; without Jānakī I will not go back to Ayodhyā; without Jānakī I won’t be able to live any longer.

22. Kingdom lost, dwelling in forests, father left his body, at last the dear wife is lost; the cruel hands of Destiny are tormenting me now thus; what more it will inflict, how can I say now?

23. O Brother Lakṣmana! What is to happen is very hard to be known beforehand by men; I cannot say what is written on my fate after this, painful or otherwise.

24. See! Both of us, the descendants of Manu, though born in a royal family, are exiled in forests due to our past deeds.

25. O Lakṣmana! It is by Fate, too, that you, abandoning the pleasures of the royal surroundings, have come out with me; and you, too, are now suffering heaps of dire troubles with me.

26. No one in our family suffered so much as we are suffering. Why we talk of our family! No human being was ever born or will ever take his birth that suffered or will suffer like me so many troubles, will be like me incapacitated and a penniless pauper.

27. O Saumitre! I am drowned in the ocean of pains and troubles; What am I to do now? I have no means to cross this ocean; I am quite helpless, no doubt.

28. No money, nor armies—O hero! you are my one and only one companion. O brother! On whom shall I be angry when I am suffering on account of my own deeds?

29. Alas! The kingdom that could have been compared in prosperity to the Indra Sabha was almost obtained by me when, in an instant, I lost it and am now in exile in forest. Lakṣman! Who can ascertain what is in the womb of Destiny?

30. Oh! That soft-bodied Sītā, with her childlike nature came out with us in this forest; but inexorable Fate has now drowned her, that perfectly beautiful woman, into an ocean of sorrows, difficult to be crossed!

31. That fair daughter of Janaka is extremely devoted to me; she is pure and holy. How will she be able to suffer troubles in the house of the king of Laṅkā!

32. O Lakṣmana! Sītā Devī will never come under the control of Rāvaṇa; how can that excellent chaste woman act like an ordinary public woman?

33. O Lakṣmana! Rest assured that in case Rāvaṇa exercises, out of his lordly position, any violence on Sītā, she will rather put an end to her life than come under his control.

34. O Lakṣmana! And when Jānakī sacrifices her life, I will assuredly do the same; for of what use, then is this body to me when that fair Sītā has gone away with her life?'

35. While the lotus-eyed Rāmacandra was thus weeping and expressing his regrets and sorrows, the religious Lakṣmana consoled him with the following sweet, truthful, words:

36. ’O Hero of the heroes! Kindly cast aside this weakness and have patience; I will soon kill that villain demon Rāvaṇa and get you back your Sītā Devī.

37. The wise steady persons remain on account of their fortitude, unshaken in their hearts whether in joy or in sorrow; whereas men of little intellect, indulge in sorrows when they are unhappy.

38. Coming in union and going out in disunion, both are under the hands of Destiny. What, then, is the need for expressing sorrows for this body, which is not soul?

39. As we have been banished from our kingdom into this forest, as there has happened this bereavement of Sītā, so in proper time, we will again get back Sītā Devī.

40. O Darling of Jānakī! There must come a time when sorrows will be converted into happiness and vice-versa; there will be nothing otherwise. So avoid this sorrow now and have firmness.

41. There are multitudes of monkeys who are our helping hands; they will go to all the four quarters and bring back to us the news of the daughter of Janaka; there is no doubt about this.

42. O Lord! Knowing the way to Laṅkā, we will go there and kill by our prowess the villainous Rāvaṇa and bring back Sītā Devī.

43. Or we will call Bharata with Satrughna and with all the armies, we all united will kill our enemy; why, then, are you thus expressing sorrows in vain?

44. O Lord! our ancestor Raghu, the hero of heroes, the monarch won his victories over the ten quarters; and you belong to that family and are now plunged in grief!

45. Alone, I can defeat all the Devas and the Demons; and if I get help, is there any doubt, then, in my killing that Rāvaṇa, the disgrace of the family of Rākṣasas?

46. O Powerful One! We may call to our aid the king of Janaka and root out that wicked source of enemy to the Devas.

47-48. O Descendant of Raghu! Like the rim of a wheel, happiness and pain come alternately; it is not that happiness or pain comes and remains forever. He whose mind is very much overwhelmed with pain or happiness is the man who is always plunged in an ocean of misery; and he can never expect to become happy.

49. See! In days of yore, Indra once got addicted into vicious habits. The Devas united put king Nahusa in place of Indra.

50. Then Indra, terrified, relinquished his post and passed very many years into an unknown and unnoticed state within the lotus.

51. Again, when the time changed, he got his own post back; and the king Nahusa fell down on this earth and became transformed into a boa constrictor through the curse of a Ṛṣi.

52. The king Nahusa wanted the wife of Indra and insulted a Brahmāṇa; therefore under the curse of Maharṣi Agasti, he was transformed into a snake on the earth.

53. Therefore, O Rāghava! One ought not to plunge in grief when a danger comes; rather one should be quite energetic in times of danger and remain firm; thus the sages do.

54. O Lord of the world! You are high-minded, omniscient and omnipotent; why are you now overwhelmed with grief, like an ordinary mortal?'

55. Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus consoled by Lakṣmana, Rāma discarded all his heavy sorrows and began to remain with his heart firm and at rest."

Thus ends the 29th chapter on the stealing of Sītā and the sorrows of Rāma in the 3rd Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXX—Rāmacandra's Navarātra ceremony

1-2. Vyāsa said: "O king! After discussing thus, Rāma and Lakṣmana remained silent; then the Ṛṣi Nārada appeared there from the sky above, singing the Rathāntara *Sāma-Veda* hymns in tune and musical gamut with his renowned *vīnā*.

3-4. Rāmacandra of indomitable prowess, on beholding him rose up from his seat, and gave him quickly an excellent seat and offerings of water for washing his feet. Then he worshipped the Muni and stood with folded hands. When the Muni ordered him, he took his seat close by Nārada.

5-8. On Rāmacandra taking his seat there with Lakṣmana with a grievous heart, Nārada asked him in a sweet tone, 'O Descendant of Raghu! Why are you afflicted with sorrows like an ordinary mortal? I know that the evil-minded Rāvaṇa has stolen Sītā Devī. I heard while in the heavens that Rāvaṇa, the descendant of Pulastya, stole away Jānakī out of fascination, could not know that would be the cause of his death. O Descendant in the family of Kākutstha! It is for the killing of Rāvaṇa that your birth has taken place; and for that purpose Jānakī has been stolen now.

Note: The real Jānakī was not stolen; Her shadow form was stolen.

9-12. O Rāghava! The Devī Jānakī, in her previous birth, was the daughter of a Muni and practiced asceticism. While engaged in her austerities in her holy hermitage, Rāvaṇa came and looking at her, prayed that beautiful woman to become his wife. Hearing this, she gave a good reproach to Rāvaṇa, when he perforce caught hold of her hairs. That ascetic woman got very angry, and, considering her body polluted by the devil's contact, resolved to put an end to her life and cursed Rāvaṇa, thus: 'O Villain! I will

be born on the surface of the earth, not from any womb but simply for your destruction and ruin.' Thus saying, she parted with her life.

13. O Tormentor of the foes! Rāvaṇa, the king of the Rākṣasas, mistook an extremely poisonous serpent for a garland and has stolen away Sītā Devī, the part incarnation of Lakṣmī, in order to root out his race.

14. O Kākutstha! When the Devas prayed for the destruction of that wicked insolent Rāvaṇa, difficult to be subdued, you are born on this earth, in the family of Aja, as a part incarnate of Hari, beyond birth, old age and death.

15. O mighty-armed! Have patience; Sītā Devī is meditating on you day and night.

16-17. Indra himself, the king of the Devas, sends the nectar and the Heavenly Cow's Milk in a pot to Her daily; and She subsists on that alone.

O Lord! On drinking the Heavenly Cow's Milk, the lotus-eyed Sītā Devī is living without any hunger or thirst! I used to see Her daily.

18. O Descendant of Raghu! I am now telling how that Rāvaṇa can be killed. Perform in this very month of Āśvin, the Navarātra vow with devotion.

19. Fasting for nine nights, the worship of the Bhagavatī, repeating the *mantram* silently and performing the *homa* ceremony, observing all the rules, will certainly fulfill one's all the desires.

20. O the best in the race of Raghu! You should offer the sacrifice before the Goddess of a sacred and unblameable animal, perform *japam* and *homa* ceremony equivalent to one-tenth of *japam*. If you do all this, you will certainly be able to release Sītā.

21. In days of yore, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā and the Devas in the Heavens all performed this worship of the Goddess.

22. Therefore, O Rāghava! Every person desiring happiness, specially those that have fallen under great difficulties, ought to do this auspicious ceremony without the least hesitation.

23-24. O Kākutstha! Viśvamitra, Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha and Kaśyapa all did this worship before. When someone stole away the wife of Bṛhaspatī, the *guru* of the Devas, he too, by the force of this worship, got his wife back. Therefore O king! dost thou also celebrate the Pūjā for the destruction of Rāvaṇa.

25-26. O high-minded one! This vow was practiced before by Indra for the destruction of Vṛtra, by Śiva for killing the demon Tripurā, by Nārāyaṇa for the killing of the demons Madhu and Kaitava; so you should also firmly resolve to perform duly this vow with your whole heart.'

27. Rāma replied: 'O Ocean of Knowledge! Who is that Devī? What is Her influence; whence has She sprung? What is Her Name? And how is that vow to be duly observed? Kindly describe all these to me in detail.'

28. Nārada answered: 'Listen, O Rāghava! That Goddess is the eternal and ever-constant Primordial Force (*parāśakti*). If you worship Her, all your difficulties will be removed and all your desires will be fulfilled.

29. She is the source of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others, and of all these living beings. Without Her force, nobody would even be able to move their limbs.

30. That Supreme Auspicious Goddess is the preserving energy of Viṣṇu, is the creative power of Brahmā, and is the destroying force of Śiva.

31. Whatever there exists in this infinite Universe, whether temporal or eternal, She is the underlying force of all; how, then, can She have an origin!

32-33. Her origin is not Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, Sun, Indra, or the other Devas, not this Earth nor this upholder of the Earth; She is devoid of any qualities, the Giver of salvation of all, the full Prakṛti. In the time of the final dissolution of this Universe, She lives with the Supreme Puruṣa.

34. She is also Saguṇa, full of qualities, and is the Creatrix of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, and has empowered them in every way to create the three *lokas*.

35. She is the Supreme Knowledge, existing before the *Vedas*, and the originator of the *Vedas*. The individual souls, knowing Her Nature, become able to free themselves from the bondage of the world.

36. She is known by endless names. Brahmā and the other Devas might choose to call Her according to their actions and qualities. I am unable to describe those names.

37. O descendant in the race of Raghu! Her endless names are formed by the various combinations of the various vowels and consonants from the letter *A* to the letter *Kṣa*.'

38. Rāma said: 'O best of the Munis! Describe briefly all the rules and regulations as to how that vow and worship are to be performed. With my heart full of devotion and faith, I will worship the Goddess today.'

39. Nārada said: 'O Rāghava! On a level plot of ground, prepare an altar. Place the Goddess there and fast for nine days.

40. O king! I will be your priest and I will, with great energy, carry out this *yajña* to fullfil the work of the Gods.'

41-42. Vyāsa said: "Then the powerful Bhagavān Hari, hearing all from the Muni, believed them to be true; and, on the approach of the month of Āśvin, prepared the altar on the top of a hill and placed the Auspicious Goddess, the World Mother and, observing all the rules, performed the vow and worshipped the Goddess.

43. Fasting for nine days, Rāma celebrated the vow and duly offered sacrifices, performed the worship and *homa* ceremonies.

44-46. When on the grand night of the eighth lunar day, the two brothers completed the vow as told by Nārada, the Supreme Bhagavatī was pleased with the worship and appeared before them, mounted on a lion, and remaining there on the mountaintop, addressed Rāma and Lakṣmana in a sweet grave tone, like the rumbling of a rain cloud, thus: 'Rāma, I am satisfied with your worship; ask from me what you desire.

47. Rāma! You are sent by the gods for the destruction of Rāvaṇa and are born as a part incarnate of Nārāyaṇa, in the pure and stainless family of Manu.

48. It is You that, in ancient times, incarnated as a fish for serving the purpose of the Devas and preserved the Vedas by killing the terrible Rākṣasas for the welfare of the Universe.

49. It is You that incarnated as a tortoise and held aloft the Maṇḍara mountain, churned the ocean and nourished the Devas.

50-51. O Rāma! It is You that incarnated, in days of yore, as a boar and held this earth aloft on your tusks. It is You that assumed the form of a Man-Lion and preserved Prahlāda, by tearing asunder the body of Hiraṅyakaśipu by Your sharp nails.

52. O Descent of Raghu! It is You that assumed, in ancient times, the form of a dwarf, and served the purpose of the Devas by deceitfully cheating Balī, the younger of Indra.

53. O son of Kauśalya! You incarnated as the son of Jamadagni in the Brahmāṇa family, extirpated the line of Ksattrīya kings and gave over this whole earth to Bhagavān Kaśyapa Ṛṣi.

54. So You are now born as the son of Daśaratha, in the stainless race of Kākutstha, at the request of the Devas, harassed by Rāvaṇa.

55-56. These powerful monkeys, born as Deva incarnates, all endowed with great power by me, will help you. Your younger brother Lakṣmana is the

incarnate of Śesanāga; this indomitable man will kill undoubtedly Indragit, the son of Rāvaṇa.

57. You will kill Rāvaṇa; then you would worship me with great devotion in the vernal season, and then enjoy your kingdom according to your liking.

58. O best of the Raghus! For full eleven thousand years you will reign on this earth; and after that reenter your heavenly abode.'

59. Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus saying, the Devī disappeared. Rāmacandra became very glad and, completing that most auspicious ceremony, performed the Bejoyā Pūjā on the tenth day and gave lots of presents to Nārada and made him go towards the ocean.

60-61. O king! Thus stimulated by the Supreme Energy, the Highest Goddess brought Rāmacandra, the husband of Kamalā, to the shores of the ocean, accompanied by Lakṣmana and the monkeys. Then he erected the bridge across the ocean and killed Rāvaṇa, the enemy of the gods. His unparalleled fame spread everywhere throughout the three *lokas*.

62. He who hears with devotion this excellent account of the Devī, will get the greatest happiness in this world, and in the end, will get the final beatitude. There is no doubt about this.

63. O king! There are extant many other Purāṇas, but none is equal to this *Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam*. Know this is my firm belief."

Here ends the thirtieth chapter on the narration of the Navarātra ceremony by Nārada and the performance of that by Rāmacandra in the 3rd Adhyāya in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa. Here ends the Third Skandha.

Fourth Skandha

Chapter I—questions regarding Kṛṣṇa's incarnation

1. Janamejaya said: "O son of Vāsavī! the chief amongst the Munis, the ocean of all knowledge, O Sinless One! the Lord and well-wisher of our families, I come to you with a mind to ask you certain questions.

2-3. I heard of yore, but I do not know, why that illustrious son of Sūrasena, that powerful Ānakadundubhi, the pious and illustrious Vasudeva, the father of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of the God Hari Himself, and who was worshipped even by the Gods, was thrown into prison by Kaṁsa?

4-5. What faults had he and his wife Devakī committed? Why that Kaṁsa the descendant of Yayāti, killed the six infant sons of Devakī? And for what reason did the God Śrī Hari incarnate Himself as the son of Vasudeva in the prison house of Kaṁsa?

6-11. How was that Lord of the Universe, Śrī Bhagavān, and the Ruler of the Yādava clan, taken to Gokula? Why was He, born of a Kṣatriya family, generally recognized as of the Gopāla (cowherd) clan? Why were His father Vasudeva and mother Devakī thrown into prison? And why did not Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of indomitable prowess, and capable to create and preserve the worlds, release father and mother instantly from their imprisoned state? I cannot conceive that the so-called Fate could have any influence on such high-souled persons, the father and mother of the Supreme Being, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; who were those sons of Vasudeva that were killed by Kaṁsa? And who was that girl child who, when struck by Kaṁsa on a slab of stone instantly rose up above the sky, assuming the form of Astabhujā, the eight-armed Goddess? O Sinless One! Kindly explain unto me how did Śrī Hari manage to perform the householder's duties when he had married several wives? and what were those glorious deeds that he did in His this incarnation and how did he finally pass away from his mortal physical

coil? My mind sinks into an ocean of confusion when I hear of the several things done by Śrī Hari; sometimes I find the deeds not capable of being done by any other than the Supreme Being Himself and sometimes I hear of deeds that can be done by an ordinary man. And, therefore I cannot decide whether Vāsudeva was the incarnation of God or an ordinary being. Be pleased to remove these doubts from my mind and describe the life of Vāsudeva in its true light.

12-14. In days of yore, the two sons of Dharma were the two best amongst the Ṛṣis, and were the Devas Nara and Nārāyaṇa. They were very high-souled persons and they performed severe austerities for long extending years. They were born as part incarnations of Viṣṇu; and, for the good of the world they performed penances, in the Badarikāśrama, controlling their six passions and free from desires.

15. The all-knowing sages Nārada and others say that the well-known Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa of indomitable prowess were the two part incarnations of those two ancient Munis Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

16. How came those two Devas Nara and Nārāyaṇa to be born in the two bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, though they did not relinquish their previous bodies!

17. And also when those two Munis had attained liberation, their goal in *yoga* by performing severe penances, how could they again be born in other bodies?

18-19. If any *śūdra* dies performing his own religion, he takes up a Vaiśya body in his next incarnation; if any Vaiśya died so, he takes up a Kṣatriya body and a Kṣatriya when adhering to his own rites and ceremonies, dying takes up a Brāhmaṇa body in his next incarnation. And if a Brāhmaṇa be free from desires and resorts to the path of peace, when he dies he becomes free from incarnations and is saved from this disease of getting into the world.

20-21. Now the reverse seems to take place in the case of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. In spite of withering up their bodies by hard penances, they took up Kṣatriya bodies. Under what influence of *karma* did they take up up birth when they were *yogīs?* Or might they, the Brāhmaṇas, become Kṣatriyas owing to some curse? Whatever it may be, kindly remove my doubts, explaining to me their causes.

22. It is heard that the Yādava clan suffered destruction through the curse of a Brāhmaṇa, and in spite of Śrī Kṛṣṇa being the incarnation of the Supreme Being, his family died of the effect of curse from Gāndhārī.

23. How was it that Pradyumna was stolen away by Śambara, the lord of the Asuras; and for what purpose when Vāsudeva, the Deva of the Devas was present, how was it that his son was stolen away from the nursery? This seems impossible.

24. Why did not Vasudeva see the stealing away of his son from the impregnable walls of His fortress-like mansion in Dvārakā with His inner vision?

25-39. O Muni! After Vāsudeva had gone to Heaven, his wives were plundered by the dacoits on the way. I am very much in doubt on this point. Also I cannot understand why did this event take place just after His translation to Heaven? Again how was Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was Viṣṇu's Full incarnation, born into this world to take off the vicious load of this earth, and to destroy the evil-doers, terrified and He fled through the fear of Jarāsandha, evacuated His kingdom of Mathurā and went with His armies and friends to Dvārakā? Vāsudeva came here to destroy the evil miscreants and to conserve the religion; how then, as He was all-knowing, did He not previously kill those dacoits, who afterward stole and plundered His wives? Was it that He, being Omniscient did not know those dacoits? He protected the Pāṇḍavas, no doubt, who were high-souled, righteous and virtuous; but I cannot understand how did He consider the high-souled virtuous persons like Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others as loads of earth and slay them. The devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, observing good customs, conducts and

practices, Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers performed the Rājasuya sacrifice according to rules, giving various offerings to the Brāhmaṇas and depended entirely on Vāsudeva; still, O Muni! they suffered terrible hardships; whither were their virtuous deeds by this time? what horrible sins did they commit that they had to suffer pains and troubles in the assembly? The highly-merited Draupadī arose from the midst of sacrificial fire and is born of the part of Lakṣmī, pure and devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How did such a glorious woman meet with incomparable terrible pains so often? how could she be caught hold of by her hair on her head by Duḥśāsana and carried to the royal assembly, when she was in her menses and extremely terrified and harassed? How did she come to be a slave of Matsya Rāj in his kingdom Virāt, and though actually crying aloud like a female osprey (eagle) she was highly insulted by Kīchaka! Alas! how could Draupadī be stolen away by Jayadratha, though later released by the Pāṇḍavas? What evil deeds did the Pāṇḍavas commit in their previous births, that they had to befall under so many telling difficulties?

40. O high-minded Muni! My ancestors performed the Rājasūya sacrifice and still they fell under so many serious difficulties. Kindly explain the causes of these to me.

41-42. If it be urged that they suffered so many serious calamities due to their actions in their former lives, that seems impossible, because they are born of the Devas. Thus arises my doubt; be pleased to explain to me.

Again how the Pāṇḍavas, the sons of Kuntī of good conduct, and knowing the illusory nature of the world, out of pretense kill Bhīṣma, Droṇa and others?

43. This appears a riddle to me that these Pāṇḍavas were led to the extermination of their race, being inspired by Hari Vāsudeva to this horrible act.

44. Rather to live on begging alms and to live on rice, growing wild or without cultivation, or to live as an artisan or artist than to kill the Valiant warriors unlawfully in a battle, simply out of voluptuous greed.

45. O Best of the Munis! You have preserved this extirpated race by producing the Goloka sons (i. e. sons born by other persons of women after their husbands are dead) of indomitable prowess.

46. And why did my honored father, born of Uttara in this respected family, encircle a snake round the neck of a Brāhmaṇa ascetic? Nobody born of a Kṣatriya family, shows signs of hatred and jealousy towards a Brāhmaṇa. Is it that my father showed such feeling to that ascetic, who took the vow of silence?

O Best of the Munis—These things and lots of others are troubling my mind with many grave doubts. O merciful saint! You know everything; be kind enough to quell this the disturbed state of my mind."

Thus ends the First Adhyāya in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter II—the supremacy of Karma

1. Sūta said: "The learned Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī and the knower of the *Purāṇas*, when thus asked by Janamejaya the son of Parīkṣit, whose heart had become calm, replied in the following words capable of removing all his doubts. Vyāsa said:

2. 'O king! You would better know that in this Universe the course of *karma* is not easily comprehensible; even the Devas are not capable of comprehending the wonderful effects of action—what to speak of men!

3. When this Universe composed of the three *guṇas* arose, it was through *karma* that everything had its origin.

4-5. It was the seed of *karma* whence the *jīvas* (the individual embodied souls) arose with neither any beginning nor any end. Those *jīvas* go again and again incarnating in numberless varieties of wombs, and then go to dissolution. When this *karma* ceases, the *jīvas* then are never to have any more connection with any other body.

6. The *karmas* done by *jīvas* are of three kinds: auspicious, inauspicious and mixed (partly auspicious and partly inauspicious); of which the auspicious is the *sāttvik karma*, the inauspicious is the *tāmasik karma* and the mixed is the *rājasik karma*. Thus have been said by the Sages.

7. These three again are subdivided into three. They are *sañcita* (accumulated), *bhaviṣya* (impending in future) and *prārabdha* (commenced). All these *karmas* are in dwelling always within the body.

8-9. O king! Everybody, even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa all under the influence of this *karma!* And they experience pleasure, pain, old age, disease and death, joy and sorrow, lust, anger, greed and other bodily qualities, out of the effects of this *karma*, which we ordinarily call Fate.

10-11. Therefore love, hatred and other bodily qualities all predominate equally in all bodies. Anger, jealousy, hatred, and other similar qualities arise in the Devas, men, and birds owing to some sort of dislikes on previous occasions; and love, compassion, pity, etc., arise out of some sort of already-existing likes.

12-13. O king! No individual can arise without some sort of action or other. It is through *karma* that the Sun traverses in the sky; it is through *karma* that the Moon was attacked with consumption disease; and it is through *karma* that the Rudra holds the disc of skull bone. This *karma*, therefore, has no beginning nor end until *mokṣa*; *karma* is the sole cause in the production of this Universe.

14-16. For this reason this whole Universe, moveable and immoveable, is real; but Munis are deeply absorbed in meditation to ascertain its reality or

unreality. They cannot definitely know it for certain whether this world is real or unreal; for where Māyā is prevalent, the universe is there. Where there is the cause fully existing in all respects, there is an effect—how can we say otherwise? The Māyā is eternal and always acts as the Prime Cause of all.

17. Therefore, O king! the sages declare that the seed of *karma* is eternal. Being controlled by *karma,* this whole universe changes incessantly.

18. O king of kings! They say it is through the will of Viṣṇu, of unbounded energy and splendor, that all beings in this universe enter, again and again, into all sorts of wombs, whether good or evil.

19. Now if the birth of Viṣṇu, of infinite prowess, takes place according to His own will, then why is it that He travels through many impious births? Why is it that Bhagavān Viṣṇu goes in different Yugas to take births in low, vile origins? Where is that self-dependent man, who leaving his abode Vaikuṇṭha and all sorts of pleasures and happiness, desires to live in this mortal temple, filled with urine, faeces and other filthy matter.

20. No intelligent man will leave comfortable resting places, amorous sports and gathering flowers for the sake of dwelling in this uterus in the womb.

21. Who likes to live with his face downwards in the womb, when he can enjoy fine heavenly soft downs, puffed up with cotton or silk?

22. Who will abandon singing, dancing and music, where all sorts of love feelings are being manifested, and think of coming down to this veritable hell?

23. Who will abandon the wonderful ambrosial nectar and prosperity given by Lakṣmī, that cannot be easily renounced, and then like to taste this urine and faeces?

24. There is no hell more aggravating in the three worlds than this existence in the womb. The Munis, afraid of this, perform difficult asceticisms in this wondrous world.

25. Wise, intelligent persons renounce their kingdoms and enjoyments, and resort to forests. Who is there so stupid as to enter willingly in the various wombs?

26. Worms and insects torment the *jīvas* in the womb; the digestive fire of the stomach heats it from below, whereas it is always fearfully tied down on all sides by the flesh, enclosing its fat or marrow. O King; not a trace of happiness is visible there.

27. It is far better to live in a prison house, fettered by hard iron chains; whereas it is not desirable to live for a moment in the womb.

28. It is very hard and painful to be in the womb for ten months. To come out of the hard and terrible womb is extremely troublesome.

29. *Jīvas* get trouble in their childhood; they cannot speak, they do not know what to say when they are hungry or thirsty; they depend entirely on others and they are aggrieved.

30. When the child becomes hungry and cries, the mother becomes anxious. When the child is afflicted with diseases and cries, the mother then knows and administers medicines.

31. Thus many troubles arise in childhood. Sages do not therefore find any happiness and do not desire to come here of their own accord.

32. O king, no sane man would forego incessant heavenly pleasures and prefer to enter into the toilsome and painful state of being born in the womb.

33. O king of kings! All the Devas, Brahmā and others have to enjoy full the effects of their *karmas*, whether they are pleasant or painful.

34. O best of kings! The fruits of *karma* have to be experienced, whether auspicious or inauspicious, be he a Deva, or human being or an animal; anyone who has embodied himself in fine or gross bodies!

35. Human beings, by dint of their practice of penance, religious austerities, almsgiving and sacrifices, rise to Indrahood. Indra, in his turn, when the effects of his good actions cease, comes down to inferior births! there is no doubt of it.

36. In the Rāma incarnation, the Devas had to incarnate themselves as monkeys; and in the Kṛṣṇa incarnation, the Devas had to incarnate themselves as human beings, cowherds and Yādavas.

37. Thus being urged on by Brahmā, Viṣṇu Bhagavān incarnates Himself many times, *yuga* after *yuga*, to preserve Vedic religion.

38. O king of mortals! Thus, like a carwheel, Bhagavān Hari incarnated Himself in various wombs successively in a wonderful manner.

39. The destruction the of Daityas was done by Hari in His many secondary incarnations.

40. Now I will narrate to you the auspicious facts of the birth of Kṛṣṇa, Who incarnated Himself in the family of Yadu.

41. O king! The illustrious Vasudeva, born of the part of the Muni Kaśyapa, had to take His birth again as a human being due to his previous curse and had to maintain his livelihood by tending cows.

42. O best of kings! And the two wives Kaśyapa, Aditi and Surasā had to take their births as the sisters Devaki and Rohinī, on account of the curses cast on them. O Descendant of Bharata! We have thus heard that they were greatly cursed at one time by Varuṇa, the water deity, who got very much angry.'

43-47. The king said, 'What fault was committed by Kaśyapa that he had to take his birth along with his wife as cowherds? And why was it that the everlasting uninterrupted *ātman,* Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa had to take his birth in Gokula? He whose abode is Vaikuṇṭha, who is the Lord of Rāma, who is Bhagavān and the Supreme amongst the gods, who is the upholder of the universe and the *yugas!* Under whose order can such a being abandon his abode and take his birth in the world like an ordinary mortal? There is this grave doubt, then, of mine on this point.

48-51. Obtaining this depraved human coil, one is always perplexed with various thoughts. Sometimes with lust, anger, jealousy, intolerance, sorrow, enmity; sometimes with pleasurable feelings, happiness, fear, sufferings, penury, sometimes with straightforwardness, good or bad deeds, faithfulness, treachery, unsteadiness, supporting others; sometimes with remorse, hesitation, bragging, greed, vain boasting, delusion or hypocrisy and sometimes with remorse; these different feelings exist in men.

52. How then can Viṣṇu Bhagavān abandon His eternal pleasures and have recourse to this human birth, full of many perplexing thoughts?

53. O best of Munis! What peculiar happiness is there in the pleasures of human births, that Śrī Bhagavān Hari has to undertake the burden of dwelling thus in the human wombs?

54-55. O Munīndra! The sufferings that are experienced while in the womb, the pain during the time of delivery, the misfortunes in early childhood, the troubles of passionate lust in youth, the greater sorrows and difficulties in the householder's life, all these are existent here; how then Bhagavān Viṣṇu incarnates Himself often in these various human births?

56-57. What an amount of enormous difficulties had Brahman-born Hari to undertake in His Rāma incarnation! That high-souled one had to suffer for his exile in forest, for the stealing away of his wife Sītā, for the frequent wars, for the final separation from his wife Sītā.

58-59. Likewise in the Kṛṣṇa-*avatāra*, the birth in a prison, the departure to Gokul, tending cows, the killing of Kaṁsa, departure to Dvārakā with great difficulty and all sorts of household difficulties were there. Why had He to suffer all these?

60. Who amongst the wise and the emancipated, of his own accord condescends to take on his shoulders so many hard sufferings? This is the grave doubt in my mind; be graciously pleased to remove my this grave doubt and make my mind tranquil.'

Here ends the Second Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhagāvatam of the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣī Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—the curse of Vasudeva and Devakī

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! The incarnation of Hari and the incarnation of the *aṁśa-avatāras* of all the other Devas are accountable to many causes—the chief cause being *karma*, the minor causes being many.

2. Hear, now, the cause of the incarnations of Kṛṣṇa's father Vasudeva, Devakī and Rohinī in detail.

3. Once on an occasion, Śrīmān Kaśyapa stole away the Kāmadhenu (the heavenly cow, yielding all desires) of the Deva Varuṇa for his sacrificial purpose; and though he was entreated by Varuṇa often to return the cow, Kaśyapa did not return to him that best of all cows.

4. Varuṇa became very sorry; he went to Brahmā, the Lord of the creation and told him humbly all that had happened and about his sorrows.

5-6. "O Glorious One! Maharṣi Kaśyapa is now almost infatuated with his sacrifice; and though I have tried all my means, he is not returning my cow. I could not hear the pitiful cries and wailings of the calves or bereavement from their mother; and I cursed Kaśyapa saying 'You would go down and take birth in the human world as a cowherd; and your two wives also are

to go there as human mortals, suffering under the greatest difficulties and dangers.'

7. O Brahmā! On seeing the distressed condition of the calves I cursed Aditi a second time that she would be put to prison, her children would be stillborn, and she would suffer lots of troubles."

8. O Janamejaya! Hearing this, the Lotus-born Brahmā called Kaśyapa before him and asked,

9. "O Fortunate One! Why have you stolen away all the cows of the Varuṇa Deva, the guardian of a quarter of the world? And why have you committed an offence in not returning the cows to Him?

10. Bhagavān! You are intelligent, you know everything fully; knowing that it is a sin to steal others' property, why have you committed the unlawful act of stealing away the cows?

11. Oh! What is the wonderful influence of covetousness! Even those that are great are not free from the clutches of greed. Covetousness is the source of all sins, is unapproved by the Sages and leads to hell.

12. Lo! Maharṣi Kaśyapa is not able to leave this vicious habit even now; what shall I do? I will hence count greed as more powerful than even Fate, the ruler of all destinies.

13. Blessed are those saints that have devoted themselves wholly to the attainment of peace, who are tranquil-hearted, lead a hermit life and don't ask anything from anybody. Verily those are blessed.

14. This covetousness is a powerful enemy; it is always unholy and odious. See! Its influence has overpowered the Maharṣi Kaśyapa and has tied him down to an ordinary affection and has urged him to commit a sinful act.'

15-16. Then the Prajāpati Brahmā, to preserve and keep the prestige in the name of justice and religion, cursed his own very dear grandson Kaśyapa,

the best of the Munis, and said: ′Go to the earth in your *aṁśa*, and take your birth in the Yadu clan, be united with your wives and work as a cowherd.

17. Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus was cursed the Maharṣi Kaśyapa by Brahmā and Varuṇa to come down to the earth as *aṁśa-avatāra* to relieve the earth of her burden.

18. Diti, too, becoming much grieved with sorrows, cursed Aditi that seven of her sons would be killed consecutively after their births."

19. Janamejaya said: "O best of Munis! Why was it that Diti so cruelly cursed her sister Aditi, the mother of Indra? Kindly explain to me the cause of this. I am sorry to hear of this curse.

20. Sūta said: "Thus asked by the son of Pariksit, Vyāsa, the son of Satyabatī, himself replied to the king about their causes in the following words:

21. Vyāsa said: ′Dakṣa Prajāpati had two daughters, Diti and Aditi; these two, of high rank, were married to Kaśyapa; and they were his favorites.

22. Aditi gave birth to the very powerful Indra, the king of the Devas. Diti, too, asked for a son of the same strength, prowess, and splendor as those of Indra.

23. Diti, of beautiful dark blue eyes, entreated to her husband said, "Give me a son, O giver of due respects to everybody! who shall be a hero as strong as Indra, religious and of indomitable energy."

24. The Muni said to her: "O Dear! Be peaceful; I advise you to take a vow, practice a rite, and when the period of your practice will be over, you will get a son like Indra."

25. Diti promised to act according to his word and took an oath; and when she practiced the vow, Maharṣi Kaśyapa impregnated the seed in her womb. Diti also bore the seed in her womb according to the usual rite.

26. The excellent fair-complexioned Diti remained sacred, observed all the rules and deeply intent on her vow, subsisted only on milk and slept on the ground.

27-28. Thus when the foetus was fully developed, Diti began to look white and full of splendor. On seeing her thus, Aditi became anxious and thought, 'If there be born of Diti a son like the powerful Indra, then my son will no doubt be deprived of his brilliancy and splendor.'

29. The proud Aditi, thinking thus, said to Indra: 'O Son! There, in the womb of Diti, is your powerful enemy.

30. O Beautiful One! Even now think out how you can kill your enemy. Before the child is born of the womb, try to destroy it.

31. Since the time I have looked on my co-wife Diti, of beautiful eyes and proud, this is the one and only thought that troubles the peace in my innermost heart.

32. The enemy, if he firmly gets hold, like a fully-developed consumption, cannot be killed; therefore the intelligent persons should destroy the enemies when they are in their buds.

33. O Śatakratu! My heart is being pierced wholly by an iron spoke when I see the womb of Diti; kill it by any means you can!

34. O High-minded One! If you like my welfare, then destroy the foetus in the womb of Diti, by any of the existent means—Sāma, Dāna or strength—and thus remove the cause of grief in my heart.'

35. Vyāsa said: "On hearing his mother, Indra, the King of the Immortals, thought over all the means and went then to his stepmother Diti.

36. That evil-minded Indra bowed down at the foot of Diti with humility and addressed her with words, sweet but full of poison.

37. ’O mother! You have become very weak, lean and thin in the practice your vow. I have come to serve you; order me now what I can do for you.

38. O chaste one to your husband! I want to shampoo your feet. To serve one’s *guru* means to earn righteousness and immortality.

39. O mother! I swear an oath, I don’t make any difference between you and my mother Aditi.’ Saying thus, he touched her feet and began to shampoo her legs.

40. The beautiful-eyed Diti, tired of the vow, lean and thin, thus being shampooed and having full faith in Indra’s words, fell to deep sleep.

41-42. Seeing her asleep, Indra, with thunderbolt in his hand, took subtle form and by the influence of his *yogik* power, entered carefully into her womb and quickly cut asunder the foetus in the womb into seven parts.

43-44. The child in the womb, struck by the thunderbolt, cried out. Indra spoke to the child gently, “Do not cry,” and meanwhile cut each of the seven parts into seven parts again. Thus, O king! The forty-nine Maruts were born.

45. When the good-natured Diti awoke, she came to know that Indra has treacherously cut the foetus in her womb and became very sorry and angry.

46-47. Knowing that all these treacherous acts are really done under the advice of her sister, the truthful Diti, who was under the vow, cursed Aditi and Indra, saying, ’As her son Indra has treacherously cut the foetus in my womb, Indra’s kingdom over the three worlds will be destroyed.

48-49. And as the sinful Aditi has secretly caused the destruction of my son, her sons, too, would also die after their birth consecutively, and she would dwell in the prison house in much trouble and anxiety, and would also bear stillborn sons in her next birth.’

50. Vyāsa said: "O king! Maharṣi Kaśyapa, the son of Marīchi, hearing the curse, allayed her anger with loving words:

51. 'O Blessed One! Do not be angry. Your sons would all become very powerful and would be called Maruts. They would be companions and friends to Indra.

52. O Dear! Your curse won't be fruitless; in the 28th Manvantara, at the end of the Dvāpara Yuga, your curse will bear fruit. Then Aditi, sinful for her jealousy and anger, will go down on earth to take the human birth through her *aṁśa* (part) and suffer according to your curse.

53. Varuṇa, too, had become very grieved and cursed her. And, due to both these curses, this Aditi will be born as a woman.'

54. O King! The fair-complexioned Diti, thus consoled by her husband, became glad and did not utter any more unpleasant words.

55. O king! Thus I have narrated to you the cause of the previous curse. O best of kings! Thus Aditi was born as Devakī out of her *aṁśa*."

Here ends the third Chapter on the former curse of Vasudeva and Devakī, of the Fourth Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IV—On Adharma

1. The King spoke: "O highly honored and intelligent one! I have heard the anecdote just related to me by you. I am very much bewildered. This *saṁsāra* (world) is vice incarnate. I wonder how the *jīvas* entangled in its meshes can again be freed!

2. When the son of Kaśyapa, whose kingdom is the three worlds, can commit such an heinous act, what wonder then, that any other ordinary person would do more blameable things!

3. On the pretense of serving and on a solemn oath, when a man can enter into his stepmother's womb and take away the life of the son, what more heinous and dreadful can take place than this!

4. When the preserver and controller of religion, the ruler of the three worlds can do such acts, you cannot expect that any other person would desist from committing heinous, contemptible acts.

5. O World-Teacher! Indeed my grandfather did unjustifiable horrible mean acts in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. It is really wonderful!

6-7. Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Kṛpa, Karṇa—even Yudhiṣṭhira, who is the part incarnate of Dharma—all these were urged by Vāsudeva into this contra-religious act. These personages are all born of Devāmśas, devoted to religion, and intelligent. These know the transitory nature of this world; how can these commit such mean blameable things!

8. O Glory of the Brāhmaṇas! What faith or regard can we have for religion when such high-souled persons commit such irreligious acts! Indeed, there is doubt whether religion exists at all or not! O Best of the Munis! My heart is agitated very much on hearing these incidents.

9. If it be said that the word of the *āptas* (seers) is a sufficient guarantee for the existence of religion, it may then be questioned where there is such an *āpta* holding such a pure religious body? All those persons who are attached to worldliness are bent on all worldly objects with their whole head and heart; these, therefore, cannot be *āptas*.

10. When self-interest is obstructed, jealousy and anger arise; and to secure one's self-interest, out of jealousy arise untruthful words.

11. Even the pure, excellent, virtuous Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with full consciousness, had to assume a Brāhmaṇa form under pretense for killing Jarāsandha.

12. Just as the holy Śrī Hari assumed a false appearance to kill Jarāsandha, similarly Arjuna, too, did a false sacrifice to accomplish his ends. Where is,

then, one who can claim to be an *āpta?* And what proof is there of the existence of such an *āpta?*

13. What sort of sacrifice was this? Did it lead to heaven in the next world, did it lead to glory or did it serve the cause of any goodwill? Why was it deprived of that peace and rest? It was performed with a view to kill Śisupāla and others.

14-15. The Paṇḍitas of yore, declare that truth is the first *pāda* (foot), cleanliness the second; compassion, the third and charity is the fourth *pāda* of *dharma* (religion). Devoid of these, how can religion stand with due regards from all?

16. How can an act bear good fruit which has no trace of virtue in it? It seems no one had any trace of faith and steadiness in their religion. The Pāṇḍavas did sacrifice out of arrogance; how can they be *āptas?*

17-20. Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Universe, assumed His Dwarf (Vāmana) incarnation with the express object to cheat Bali, the king of the Daityas. Now, O Muni! The king Bali performed one hundred sacrifices; he was the protector of the *Vedas*, virtuous, charitable, truthful and self controlled; why was such a man dislodged from his position by the powerful Viṣṇu? Who was victorious in this affair? Was it Bali, who was cheated? Or was it Vāmana Deva, the expert in making nice pretense? Who was the better of the two? I have got grave doubts on this point. O the best of the twiceborn! You are the composer of the *Purāṇas*, virtuous, and liberal-hearted. Speak what is true and thus make my heart tranquil."

21-23. Vyāsa said: "O king! The victory was certainly Bali's, inasmuch as he fulfilled his promise and gave over his kingdom of earth to Viṣṇu. And inasmuch as Viṣṇu in his 5th or dwarf incarnation deceived Bali, he had to become a dwarf—a small mean person indicated even by the shortness of his body. O king! There is nothing superior in religion to Truth. See! Śrī Hari, for his falsehood, even had to become a gatekeeper of Bali. O king! It

is hardly possible for a human being to observe in every way the injunctions of Truth.

24. Powerful indeed is Māyā, composed of the three qualities and of various forms. By Her is created this Universe, made manifold by the admixture of the three qualities (*sattva, rājas* and *tamas*).

25. Therefore, how can you expect truth to be observed wholly, without the least violation, by a deceiver. This world is made up of the mixture of *rājas;* O king! Know this as the everyday routine of things in nature.

26-27. It is only the Munis and Hermits that can observe pure Truth; and that is why they are without any attachment; they do not accept anything from any other person; they are desireless; and they all have no rough wear and tear of the world. They exist as perfect examples; their case is quite separate. All the others are caught under the meshes of the three *māyik guṇas*.

28. O Best of kings! The *dharma-śāstras, Purāṇas* and the *Aṅgas* of the *Vedas* are full of diverse opinions on any one point under consideration, for their composers were under the influence of the different *guṇas*.

29. The *saguṇa* persons, under the influence of Māyā do *saguṇa* works, and the *nirguṇa* persons who are above Māyā do not do any *saguṇa* work. And when the *guṇas* are mixed with one another, they cannot remain pure; they exhibit qualities of those *guṇas* with which they are mixed.

30. O king! One is influenced by Māyā as soon as one takes birth in this world; so nobody can remain steady in this pure, steady maxim of Truth, untainted by any falsehood or deceit.

31. The sense organs, *indriyas*, confound the *buddhi* (reason) and make one follow the path of enjoying sensual things. Mind is attached to senses and follows diverse ways, urged on furiously by the three *guṇas*.

32. O king! All the beings, from Brahmā down to the moving and non-moving things, fall under the delusion of Māyā; She plays with them.

33. This Māyā is always imposing on all; and She is incessantly making formations and transformations in this Universe. O king of kings! The man under the influence of action takes recourse to this untruth; his actions arise first from this untruth from the very moment of his birth.

34. Persons when they do not get their desired objects after they have pondered how to secure the sensual objects, take recourse to pretext, and from that pretext do many sinful acts.

35. Lust, anger, and avarice—these three are very powerful enemies. The *jīvas* under their influence cannot distinguish right from wrong.

36. When wealth, might and rank come to a person, he gets deep-rooted *ahaṅkāra*, and becomes very egoistic; from *ahaṅkāra* comes delusion, and from delusion, insensibility and death ensue.

37-38. Here men argue mentally many plans; and thence jealousy, intolerance and enmity spring in the heart; next arise, out of delusion, hope, thirst, misery, low-spiritedness, arrogance and irreligiousness.

39. It is through *ahaṅkāra* that people are led to perform sacrifices, charities, visit places of pilgrimages, practice vows and rules for religious rites and ceremonies.

40. Hence these sacrificial acts, etc., proceeding from *ahaṅkāra* are unable to remove the clouds of impurity from the mind, as observance of purity and cleanliness does. Especially when any action is done through greed or undue affection as its motive, it cannot be pure in every respect.

41. Therefore, at the commencement of any sacrifice, the wise persons look at the purity of sacrificial things (*dravya-śuddhi*); those articles that are collected without injuring others are the best in religious acts.

42. O best of Kings! If the things acquired by injuring others are utilised in any auspicious act, they yield contrary results at the time of fruition.

43. It is he only, whose mind is very pure and undefiled, who gets the results wholly auspicious from any sacrificial act. Minds defiled do not acquire their proper desired objects.

44-45. When the preceptor and the priests ordained are sincere and pure; moreover, when the place, moment, act, sacrificial things, the *mantras* and the sacrificer are all holy, then and there only, the full results accrue in their entirety to the sacrificer.

46. If the sacrifice be intended for the destruction of one's enemy or for a personal motive or one's gain, it converts auspicious results into inauspicious, and lead to ruin in the end.

47. Selfish persons are unable to ascertain which actions are auspicious and which are not; they depend on the circumstances what they call *daiva*, the will of Fate, and the people do acts sinful instead of virtuous.

48-49. The Devas and demons all are created by Brāhmā, the Prajāpati, the Creator; they all are selfish. Hence they are always at war with each other. The Devas are born from the *sattva-guṇa;* the human beings are sprung from the *rājas* and the birds are sprung from the *tamas*.

50. O King! When even the Devas born of the *sattva-guṇa* are always engaged in inimical actions, then what wonder is there that the lower ones would be at war with one another!

51-52. O King! When the Devas are always discontented, filled with jealousy and envy, at war amongst each other, and obstructors of the ascetics and the austere persons, then know that this Universe has sprung from *ahaṅkāra* (egoism). How can you expect them to be free from feelings of anger, jealousy; etc.!

Here ends the Fourth Chapter on Adharma of the Fourth Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—the dialogues of Nara-Nārāyaṇa

1. Vyāsa said: "O best of kings! There is no need of dwelling at length on this point; suffice to say that in this world are very rarely found persons that are truly religious and free from egoism, jealousy, anger, etc.

2. O king of kings! Even in the Satya Yuga, the Golden age, this world, moving and unmoving, was covered with feelings of jealousy and anger. What to say in this Kali Yuga! There is no wonder that this world would be full of these vicious things.

3. O best of kings! When the Devas are deceitful, jealous, and filled with feelings of anger, what is to be said with human beings and other lower creatures!

4. O Lord of the Earth! It is natural that injury be inflicted on those persons that commit injury; but when peaceful persons void of any enmity are injured, that is certainly a wicked and mischievous act.

5. Whenever any devout ascetic, calm and quiet, is engaged in prayer and meditation, and silent muttering of *mantrams*, Indra the king of the immortals throws hindrance in his asceticism. This is certainly a mischievous act.

6. Holy, unholy and mixed persons exist in all the *yugas*. To those that are holy, all the *yugas* are the Satya yuga; to the unholy ones always it is the Kali Yuga; and to the mixed ones, always it is Tretā and Dvāpara.

7. You will very seldom find any persons following really the True Religion; otherwise, you would have found all the persons in the different *yugas* religious as appropriate to those *yugas*.

8. O king! In all cases where the conservation of religions and religious affairs are concerned, know that the original wish and desire is the cause. If this desire be impure and sullied, religion becomes also sullied; for verily, this impurity in one's desire is one's cause of ruin in every respect. Therefore the impure desires are never to be cherished and indulged.

9. A son named Dharma was born of the heart of Brahmā; he was devoted to *brahma-jñāṇa* (knowledge of Brahman), truthful, and always engaged in rites and ceremonies in accordance with the Vedic religion.

10. This high-souled Muni Dharma was a householder and married duly, according to the proper procedure, to the ten daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa.

11. This Dharma, the foremost amongst the followers of truth, impregnated them and had four sons, named respectively Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Nara, and Nārāyaṇa.

12. Hari and Kṛṣṇa, amongst the four, used to remain always in the practice of *yoga*.

13. Nara and Nārāyaṇa came over to the Himālayān mountains and, in the hermitage of Badarikā, commenced difficult religious asceticism and penance.

14. The foremost of the ascetics, those two ancient Munis, began to recite that highest *mantra* of Para Brahmā, the Gāyatrī, on the wide spacious bank of the Ganges.

15. The two Ṛṣis named Nara and Nārāyaṇa, born of Hari's Aṁśa, practiced excellent *tapasyā* for full one thousand years.

16. The whole Universe, moving and unmoving, became hot through the Fire of their *tapasyā*. Indra became also perplexed.

17-18. The thousand-eyed Indra became anxious, and thought within himself thus: 'What is to be done now? These two sons of Dharma are

practising *tapasyā* and are in meditation. If they succeed, they can occupy my excellent seat in Heaven; how can I break their *tapasyā,* and what steps shall I take to hinder them?'

19-20. Indra brought lust, anger and insurmountable avarice into existence and intent on hindering their *tapasyā*, mounted on the elephant Airāvata, went quickly to the hill Gandhamādan, and approaching the holy hermitage, saw the two ancient Ṛṣis.

21. Their bodies were incandescent by *tapasyā*, as if they were the two rising Suns. Were they Brahmā, Viṣṇu manifested there, or were they the two shining sources of light? These two Ṛṣis were the sons of Dharma. What would they do with their *tapasyā?*

22-23. Thinking thus, the lord of Śachī seeing them addressed thus: 'O highly fortunate ones! O two Ṛṣis, the sons of Dharma! Please tell me what are your objects? I have come here to give thee excellent boons; I am very pleased with your *tapasyā;* therefore ask boons from me; and even if they be not worth giving, I will give them to you.'

24-25. Vyāsa said: "The Ṛṣis were deeply immersed in meditation and seemed very firm and resolute; they, therefore, did not reply anything, though Indra, standing before them, repeatedly urged them to ask boons from him. Seeing this, the king of the immortals began to terrify them with his supernatural enchanting fearful *māyik* powers.

26. He created lions, tigers, wolves and other murderous animals and began to terrify the two Ṛṣis with them; Indra also produced rains, hurricanes and fires very frequently so that they might yield.

27. In spite of Indra's attempt to terrify them by his wonderful Māyā, the two Munis, Nara-Nārāyaṇa, the two sons of Dharma, could not be brought under his control. So Indra returned to his own place.

28-31. And he became very sorry and thought thus: ’These two Munis could not be tempted away with boons, nor did they fly away from their place of worship, though terrified with fire, wind, wolves, tigers and lions. No one, I think, would be able to break their meditation. When fear and temptations have not distracted their meditation, they are certainly meditating on the Eternal Mahā Vidyā Śrī Bhuvaneśwarī, the Prime Force of Nature, the Source of all Māyās, the Goddess and Creatrix of all the worlds, the wonderful highest Prakṛti; what other expert in emitting Māyā there can be? Who can break their meditation?

32. Indeed! how can this whole host of Māyās that are created by Gods and Asuras overpower those purged of all their sins, who are meditating on their Creator, the Supreme Māyā, that illusion by which one considers the unreal Universe as really existent and as distinct from the Supreme Spirit, whence the Gods and Asuras have derived all their supernatural powers.

33. He in whose heart reign the seed-*mantras* of Vāk, Kāma and Māyā, called *vāg-bīja* (*aiṁ*), *kāma-bija* (*klīṁ*) and *māyā-bīja* (*hṛīṁ*), no one is able to stand against and overpower him.’

34-35. “O king! Indra, enchanted by Māyā, did not desist from tempting the two Ṛṣis, but he went on thinking other means by which their asceticism could be baffled. He asked Kāma and Vasanta (the god of Lust and the season spring) to come before him and addressed them, thus: ’O Kāma! You now be united with your wife Rati and Vasanta (the God of spring), and go to the hill Gandhamādan, accompanied by all the Apsarās (celestial damsels) and with all the *rasas* (love sentiments).

NOTE: The Gandhamādan is the mountain-like unsurpassable intoxicating happiness of the senses.

36-37. There you will find the two ancient excellent Ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa practising asceticism in solitude, in the hermitage of Badarikā. O Manmathā! You better go before them, and with the influence of your arrows, do now my work and make their hearts extremely lustful.

38. O Fortunate One! Charm over them by means of your arrows, make them leave their asceticism by magical spells.

39. Who is there in this world of Devas, Daityas and human beings that, being whipped by your arrows, do not come under your control?

40. When Brahmā, I, Mahādeva, Moon and Fire are all fascinated by your arrows, then is there any doubt that these two Ṛṣis would not be fascinated by them?

41. I am sending these public women as your assistants. Rambhā and other beautiful celestial nymphs would all follow you.

42. You alone, or Rambhā or Tilottamā alone can do this work. Will there be any doubt if you all unite in this?

43. O Good One! Do this work for me; I will confer on you your desired objects.

44. O Manmathā! I tempted them with boons but these two ascetics of controlled minds could not be displaced from their seats. My efforts were rendered useless.

45. I frightened them very much with all the *māyik* powers; yet they could not be dislocated from their deep thoughts. It seems that they are quite heedless in the preservation of their bodies.'

46. Vyāsa said: "Kāmadeva, on hearing the king of the Devas, addressed him thus: 'O Indra! Today I will fulfill all your desires.

47. But there is one word. If these two ascetics be meditating on Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā or the Sun, then I will be able to bring them under my control.

48. But if they be meditating on the Great Seed-Mantra, the root of all Māyā, and the great *kāma-bījam*, the king of Kāma, I will never be able to subdue such a devotee of the Highest Devī.

49. If these two ascetics have devotedly taken refuge of the Great Power Mahā-Devī, then they will not come under the sight of my arrows.’

50. Indra said: ’O Blessed One! Go now with your assistants, ready to do your work. Nobody but you, I find, can fulfill my this beneficial, though very difficult work.’

Vyāsa said: “Thus ordered by Indra, they all departed to where the Dharma’s sons Nara and Nārāyaṇa were performing their hard *tapasyās*.”

Here ends the Fifth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VI—the origin of Urvaśī

1. Vyāsa said: O king! First there appeared on the mountain the king of the seasons, Vasanta the Spring. All the trees flowered and became very beautiful; and the bees began to hum round on all sides.

2. Mangoes, Bokul trees, the beautiful Tilaka trees, the good Kimsukas, Sāl, Tāl, Tamāl and Madhuka trees assumed unequalled beauty, ornamented with their flowers.

3. Cuckoos began to sing beautifully in the tops of trees; the creepers flowered and began to embrace the trees.

4. The creatures became enamored with love and began to look on their paramours with amorous eyes and began to hold pleasant sexual intercourse.

5. The southern breeze blew gently, full of pleasant scents and agreeable to touch. The sensual organs became very powerful and could no longer be brought under their control by the Munis.

6. Then Kāma united with Rati, hurriedly entered into the Hermitage of Badarikā with the five arrows in his hands.

7. Rambhā, Tilottamā, and other prominent Apsarās all went to that beautiful hermitage and began to sing in perfect tune with gamuts, key notes and respective pauses.

8. The two Maharṣis awoke on hearing the sweet music, the warbling of the cuckoos and the nice hummings of the bees.

9. Nara-Nārāyaṇa became anxious to see the untimely bursting of the Vasanta (vernal season) and the flowering of the trees.

10. 'How can the spring season come now at such an untimely season. I see, all the creatures are become extremely amorous with each other and infatuated with passionate lust.

11. It is very unusual that untimely things should happen. How has this come to pass?' Struck with wonder, Nārāyaṇa began to speak to Nara with eyes wide.

12. Nārāyaṇa said: 'O Brother! See, these trees look very elegant with flowers on them; the cuckoos are sounding sweet notes on all sides; the bees are humming on all sides.

13. Spring, the lion of the seasons, has burst asunder the fierce elephant, the winter season, by its sharp nails, as testified by the budding of Palāsa flowers.

14-18. O Brahman! See how beautiful and excellent has become this hermitage with the presence of the Goddess Spring Lakṣmī? O Devarṣī! The Raktāśoka flower is the palm of her hand; KimŚuka flower, her excellent feet; Nīlāsoka flowers, her black hairs on her head, the full-blown lotuses, her eyes; the bel fruits, her breast; the jolly Kunda flowers, her teeth; Manjari, her beautiful ears; red Bandhu flowers, her lips; Sindhubāra, her wonderful nails; the peacocks, her ornaments; the sounds of Sārasa

birds, the jingling of her feet ornaments; the wreaths of flowers, her waist ornaments; the mad gooses, her gait; Kadamba flower's filaments, her hairs on her body; O best of ascetics! With all these, the Vasanta Lakṣmī has assumed a wonderful nice appearance.

19. Why has this occurred untimely? Think over it; O Devarṣi! I am struck with wonder; surely this is obstructive of our penances.

20. Hear! There the Apsarās are singing sweetly a song, tending to destroy our *tapasyā;* it seems these are the means, no doubt, adopted by Indra to pollute our *tapasyā*.

21. Why is this spring season now generating our pleasures? It is clear that that Indra, the enemy of the Asuras, is become afraid of our *tapasyā* and is creating these obstructions to disturb our asceticism.

22. Lo! The cool, fragrant and pleasant breezes are blowing; no other cause can be traced than the wicked deed of Indra.'

23. When the best of the Brāhmaṇas, the Deva Nārāyaṇa was addressing thus, the whole host of Cupid became visible before their sight.

24. And the two Ṛṣis were very much surprised on seeing them.

25-27. They saw near to them Cupid with his attendants Menakā, Rambhā, Tilottamā, Puspagandhā, Sukeśī, Mahāśvetā, Manoramā, Pramodvarā, Ghritāchī, Chāruhāsinī, the expert in music, Chandra Prabhā, the cuckoo-voiced Somā, the lotus-eyed Vidyunmālā, Kānchana malinī, and others.

28. Eight thousand five hundred Apsarās and long multitudes of the hosts of Cupid, the Munis saw and were surprised.

29. Then those prostitutes of the Devas, dressed with their heavenly ornaments and flowers, appeared before the Munis and bowed down their heads on the ground.

30. The Apsarās began their enchanting songs, exciting much passion and rarely heard or seen in this world.

31-32. The two Munis, Bhagavān Viṣṇu-like Nara-Nārāyaṇa were pleased with their music and addressed them thus: 'O thin-waisted good-looking Apsarās! You have come here as guests, I see, from your Heavenly world. Stay here in peace and all comfort; we will gladly serve you as your hosts.'

33-34. Vyāsa said: "O king! The two Munis, thinking that Indra has sent these Apsarās to obstruct their *tapasyā,* were filled with egoism and determined to create out of their strength of Tapasyā a new Apsarā, who would be very much more beautiful and possessing far more heavenly graces than the present ones, who are ordinary looking and clumsy in their behaviors.

35. And the Munis, by clapping or striking their thighs, instantly created a woman, exquisitely beautiful in all respects.

36. This good looking woman was named Urvaśī, since she was produced from the thighs. And all the other Apsarās present there were very much thunderstruck on seeing that Urvaśī.

37. Then the Muni Nārāyaṇa easily created as many women as there were Apsarās to serve them.

38. The just produced Apsarās brought with them all sorts of offerings in their hands, and singing and smiling, came before the Munis and bowed down before them with clasped hands.

39. The heavenly damsels sent by Indra, though enchanting to others were themselves now bewildered on beholding Urvaśi, beautiful in all respects and produced out of the *tapasyā* of the Munis; and the hairs of their bodies stood on end. Then they tried to make their faces as beautiful as they could and began to address the Munis thus:

40. ’O Munis! We are ignorant girls; how can we praise you and the greatness of your *tapasyā* and at your steadiness. Oh! There is no one in this Universe, that is not burnt with the passion by the arrows of our sharp eyesight! But there is no trace of mental disturbance and defilement in you; Oh! Wonderful is your greatness, indeed!

41. We are convinced that both of you are *aṁśas* of Viṣṇu and that your treasures are your incessant peace and control of mind. We have come here not to serve you but to hinder you in your penances, that we may fulfill the desires of Indra.

42. By what good luck of ours we have got a sight of thee, we do not know; we do not know also what merits we did. We have committed a great offence to you; still you have not cursed us. You have considered us as those of your own family and have pardoned us. Therefore our minds are free from sorrow and anxiety. Much praise be to your forgiveness! Wise saints do not squander away the occult powers derived from austerities in trivial ways like cursing others.’

43. Vyāsa said: “Very pleased were those two Dharma’s sons, the two Maharṣis, self controlled and desireless, to hear these words of those godly behaved heavenly damsels; they then spoke to the damsels, blazing with the fire of their Tapas.

44-45. Nara and Nārāyaṇa said: ’O Damsels! We are pleased with you; better ask from us your desired boons; we will instantly grant them to you. You better take with you to your Heaven this beautiful-eyed Urvaśī, born of our thighs as a present to your Deva Rāja, the Indra.

46. Now peace be to all the Devas; you better go to your own places; do not in future disturb the *tapasyā* of others.’

47. The damsels said: ’Where will we go now? We have reached your lotus feet through our devotion, and our joy knows no bounds; O Nārāyaṇa the Supreme amongst the Gods!

48. O Lord! O Madhusūdana! O Lotus-eyed! If Thou art pleased with us and dost want to give us our desired boons, we disclose to you our wished-for object.

49. O Lord of the Devas! Thou art the Lord of the world; so beest Thou the Lord of us. O Destroyer of the foes! We will gladly put ourselves at the service of your feet.

50. Let those sixteen hundred and fifty beautiful-eyed damsels including Urvaśī, that are your creation and that are now existing here, let them go unto Heaven by your command.

51. And we, the sixteen hundred and fifty damsels that have come before, may be allowed to remain here at your service.

52. O Mādhava! You are the Lord of the Devas; be true to your word and give us our desires. Those seers, the Munis, who know what is *dharma,* declare that it is sin equivalent to murder to destroy the hopes of those women that are struck with passion.

53. We are very fortunate to come here from Heaven and we are filled with extreme love for you, O Deveśa! You are the Lord of the world; you can do all things; therefore do not leave us.'

54. Nārāyaṇa said: 'O thin-bodied damsels! I am practising at this place the *tapasyā* for full one thousand years, controlling my passions; how can I now break it by engaging myself to enjoy sensual things?

55. I have no inclination to indulge in sexual pleasures, tending to destroy the Highest Bliss as well as the Highest Dharma. What intelligent person will like to indulge like a beast in sensual pleasures?'

56-57. The Apsarās said: 'Of the five senses; sound, etc., the pleasures attained through the sensation of touch are excellent, and are reckoned as the source of Bliss; no other pleasures stand equal to it. Therefore do then

fulfill our words, and enjoy incessantly this highest bliss and roam freely in this Gandhamādan mountain.

58. If you like to go to Heaven, be pleased to know that there is no Superior Heaven to Gandhamādan (the mountain like intoxicating happiness of the senses). Dost thou enjoy the highest bliss, the pleasant sexual intercourse with us, the heavenly damsels in this very beautiful and lovely place.

Thus ends the Sixth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the origin of Urvaśī.

Chapter VII—On Ahaṅkāra

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! Dharma's son of excellent prowess, hearing thus the words of these damsels, thought within himself thus: 'What shall I do under the above circumstances?

2. If I indulge now in sexual pleasures, I will be an object of laughter amongst the Munis. This present trouble has, no doubt, arisen from my *ahaṅkāra* (egoism). This *ahaṅkāra* is the first and foremost in ruining one's *dharma*.

3-5. The wise sages have declared this *ahaṅkāra* as the root of this tree of world. I did not observe the vow of silence on seeing those damsels come here; I have held much conversations with them; therefore I have got into this troublesome anxiety and sorrow. I have created these damsels at the expense of my *dharma* and *tapasyā*. The beautiful and lovely damsels sent by Indra are now full of lust and are bent on ruining my *tapasayā*. Now if through *ahaṅkāra* I had not created the damsels, I would not have fallen into this difficulty. Now I am caught firmly in the meshes of my own creation like a spider; what am I to do next?

6-7. If I abandon these damsels, thinking that there is no necessity to reconsider the matter, then these would be brokenhearted; and they would go away cursing me. Yet I would be free from this present danger at least, and then be able to practice excellent *tapasyā* in a lonely place. Therefore, now, I will get angry and tell these damsels go away from me.'

8. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Muni Nārāyaṇa thought that he would become thus happy; but, at the next moment, he discussed in his mind thus:

9. 'The second great enemy is anger; it is greater than causing hurt to others; and it is greater than lust and avarice.

10. Out of anger people commit murder; this murder is the source of hell and is giving pains to all.

11. As trees, rubbing against each other, generate fire; and are themselves burnt up in this fire, so fire arising from this body ultimately burns this body to death.'

12. Vyāsa said: "The younger brother Nara on seeing his elder brother anxious and low-spirited, spoke out what is right, as follows:

13. 'O Nārāyaṇa! You are very intelligent and very good; therefore reliquish this feeling of anger and betake to quietude and peace, and kill the dreadful anger.

14. Do you not remember that it is through this ahaṅkāra and anger that our *tapasyā* was destroyed on a previous occasion; and we had to fight severely with Prahlāda, the Lord of the Asuras for one full divine thousand years.

15-16. O Lord of the Devas! We were put to much difficulties then; therefore O Lord of the Munis! Get rid of this anger; be quiet! The sages declare the peace is the root cause and the only object of *tapasyā*.'

17.Vyāsa said: “On hearing these words of his younger brother Nara, Dharma’s son Nārāyaṇa took to peace.”

18. Janamejaya said: “O Lord of the Munis! The high-souled Prahlāda was a devotee of Viṣṇu and of a peace-loving heart: how it was that in the ancient days, the battle took place between him and these Ṛṣis; how could the Ṛṣis fight? There is this great doubt in my mind.

19-20. These two Dharma’s sons were ascetics and peace-loving; how the fight could come to pass between these and the Daityāsuras? How did these two Ṛṣis fight with the high-souled Prahlāda?

21-22. Prahlāda was very religious, full of knowledge and very much devoted to Viṣṇu. Nara-Nārāyaṇa were *sāttvik* ascetics; therefore if there had occurred enmity between those, it appears that the religion and asceticism, *tapasyā* and *dharma* were matters in name only; and the labor was spent in vain in the golden age even. What was the value of asceticism and meditation and muttering silently the *mantras!* No one can make out.

23. Oh! Persons like them could not conquer their hearts full of anger and egoism! Anger and jealousy cannot spring unless there be at the bottom a feeling of egoism (*ahaṅkāra*).

24. All the passions, lust, greed, anger, etc., come out of *ahaṅkāra*, there is no doubt of it; one hundred *lakh* years of severe asceticism are rendered quite useless by the cropping up afterwards of a bit of *ahaṅkāra*.

25. As darkness is dispelled entirely on sunrise, so no trace of religious merit can exist on the rising of a bit of *ahaṅkāra*.

26. When Prahlāda could fight with Śrī Bhagavān Hari, then, Oh! all his merits in this world are rendered of no use whatsoever.

27. Where is the religious merit and where is peace when the quiet-souled persons Nara-Nārāyaṇa, the two Ṛṣis began to fight, without paying any heed to their highest end, the *tapasyā?*

28. When *ahaṅkāra* became invincible to the two Ṛṣis, then what can be expected from the weak trivial persons like us in the matter of subjugating this *ahaṅkāra?*

29. Who can be free from *ahaṅkāra* in these three worlds, when the high-souled persons like the above were not free from it? I am now quite confident that in this Universe, nobody was ever before free from *ahaṅkāra* nor will there be any such in the distant future.

30. One can be free if bound by an iron or a wooden chain; but when one is pierced by *ahaṅkāra*, one can never become free from it.

31. This whole Universe, moving and unmoving, is rolling in this *saṁsāra* (transmigration) polluted by urine and faeces, being covered by *ahaṅkāra*.

32. Where is, then the *brahma-jñāṇa?* O Good One in vows! The *karma* theory, according to the Mīmāṁsakas, seems reasonable and true.

33. O Muni! What can you expect from the weak-minded persons like me in this Kaliyuga, when the great persons are always overpowered with lust, anger, etc.?'

34-35. Vyāsa said: "O Descendant of Bharata! How can the effect be different from its cause? Gold and golden earrings though different in form owing to *upādhis*, are both similar to their original cause, the metal gold. Thread is the cause of cloth; therefore as cloth cannot be different from its thread, so this whole universe, moving and unmoving, is sprung from *ahaṅkāra;* then how can it be free from *ahaṅkāra?*

36. All this, moving and unmoving, including a blade of grass, are fashioned out of the three qualities of Māyā; so if it be formed of those qualities, what repentance can come to those who are wise and know every phenomenon as unreal?

37. O Best of kings! Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Maheśa, even these are all rolling in this vast ocean of *saṁsāra*, being bewildered and fascinated by *ahaṅkāra*.

38. The great sages like Vasiṣṭha, Nārada and the other Munis are frequently taking their births in this *saṁsāra*.

39. In this *trilokī*, there is not even one embodied soul who is entirely free from this Māyā and has become quiet and immersed in the high bliss of the Supreme Self.

40. O Best of kings! Lust, anger, avarice, and fascination, all arise from *ahaṅkāra*. These do not leave any embodied person.

41-42. Studying all the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*, going to all the sacred places pilgrimages, making charities, thinking on Paramātman and worshipping the gods, doing all these, the people still get attached to sensual objects and act like a thief.

43. O Son of Kuru! In the three *yugas*—Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara—*dharma* had been pierced and wounded very much; what to say of *dharma* in this Kaliyuga!

44. You will find quarrels, avarice, anger raging always in this Kaliyuga. Therefore there is no wonder that you will not find anyone thinking and doing what is worth thinking, and doing what is not worth doing!

45. Free from envy, anger, and jealousy, such persons are rare nowadays in this Kaliyuga. Some peaceful persons exist here and there to keep up the ideal."

46. The king said: "O Muni! They are blessed and holy who are free from this fascination of Māyā, self-controlled, who have conquered their passions, and who follow good conduct. They have risen above the *trilokī*.

47. O Best of Munis! My high-minded father put a dead serpent round the neck of an ascetic without any fault; I am very sorry to think of his act.

48. Therefore, O Muni ! Kindly suggest any means by which I can now redress that act. O Bhagavān! I do not know what will be the result of this act, committed out of the bewildering of intellect.

49. Fools in search of honey see only honey before them but not the falls, whence they might tumble down and die. So the stupid men do disgraceful acts and do not get afraid of the tortures of hell.

50. Kindly describe in detail how the fight incurred between Prahlāda and Nārāyaṇa in ancient times.

51. How was it that Prahlāda went out of Pātāla (the nether regions) and went to the great holy place, the hermitage of Badarikaśrama in the Sārasvata country, the great place for pilgrimage.

52. O Muni! What was it that led the best of the Munis, the two ascetics to fight with Prahlāda?

53. The enmity springs where there is wealth, wife, or land. The two Maharṣis were desireless, had nothing of these; how, then, without any cause, they fought such a battle?

54. Prahlāda was also very religious and knew that those two Ṛṣis were the Devas; knowing this, why did he fight with them?

55. So describe in detail the cause of all these."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter in the 4th Book of śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses on Ahaṅkāra by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—going to the Tīrthas

1. Sūta said: "Thus asked by the son of Parīkṣit, the king Janamejaya, the best of the Brāhmaṇas, the son of Satyavatī Vyāsa, spoke in detail the following:

2. ’The virtuous Janamejaya became very much sorry and despondent when he heard in detail the improper acts of his own father Parīkṣit, the son of Uttarā.

3. Owing to insulting the Brāhmaṇa boy, his father had to go to hell; and he was constantly thinking how to release his father.

4. The son is called *putra* for he releases his father from the hell named *put*. He is the true son that can do so.

5-6. The fortunate son of Parīkṣit became very much tormented and bewildered with fear when he heard about the fate of his father, who died bitten by a serpent on the top of a palace due to the curse of a Brāhmaṇa, devoid of any bathing, charities, and the purificatory acts.

7. When Vyāsa returned home, Janamejaya asked him the whole course of events of Nara-Nārāyaṇa.

8. Vyāsa said: ’O King! When the terrible Hiraṇyakaśipu was slain, his son Prahlāda was installed on his throne.

9. During the government of Prahlāda, the chief of the Daityas, the worshipper of the Brāhmaṇas and Devas, the kings on earth began with faith to do many sacrifices for the satisfaction of the Devas.

10. The Brāhmaṇas were engaged in their *tapasyā, dharma*, and in frequenting the places of pilgrimages; the Vaiśyas in their trade; and the *śūdras* in serving the other three classes.

11. The incarnation of Hari, Nṛsiṁha (the Man-Lion) made Prahlāda, the king of the Daityas in the Pātāla-loka (nether regions); and Prahlāda, engaged there, spent his time in the preservation and welfare of his subjects.

12. Once upon on a time, the great ascetic Chyāvana Muni, the son of Bhṛgu went on his way to bathing in the river Narmada, at the place of pilgrimage called Vyārhitīśvara.

13. There he saw the great river Revā and, while he was descending in the river, a dreadful snake caught hold of him and carried him to the Pātāla-loka. The Muni was greatly terrified and began to think of the Deva of the Devas, Janārdana Viṣṇu.

14-15. On remembering the lotus-eyed Viṣṇu, the serpent lost his poison, and Chyāvana Muni did not find any trouble, though carried to the Pātāla.

16. Then the serpent, coming to know of the power of the Muni, left him for fear that the Muni might curse him; the snake afterwards repented very much.

17. Chyāvana, the best of the Munis, worshipped by the daughters of the serpents, roamed there and entered once into a beautiful palace of the Nāgas and the Dānavas.

18. While he was walking, he was seen by the religious king of the Daityas, Prahlāda.

19. The lord of the Daityas, on seeing Chyāvana, worshipped him and enquired of him the cause of his coming there.

20. "Are you sent here by Indra? Speak truly, O best of the Brāhmaṇas. Is it to pry into my kingdom out of the enmity between the Devas and the Daityas?"

21. Chyāvana said: "What have I to do with Indra? That I might be sent by him, as his spy, messenger, to your city!

22. O Chief of the Daityas! Know me as Chyāvana, the son of Bhṛgu, prompt in religious duties and whose eye is illumined by knowledge. Do not fear that I am sent here by Indra.

23. When I went to bathe in a place of pilgrimage on the holy Narmadā, and dropped into the river, a poisonous snake caught hold of me and carried me here.

24. I took the name of Viṣṇu; and the serpent, hearing Viṣṇu's name, became void of poison and left me here as you see.

25. O king! Coming here, I see you. You are a devotee of Viṣṇu; know me, too, a devotee of the same Viṣṇu."

26. Vyāsa said: "O king! Prahlāda, the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, on hearing Chyāvana's sweet words, gladly asked him about the various places of pilgrimages.

27. Prahlāda said: 'O Best of Munis! Kindly describe to me in detail, the places of pilgrimages on the earth, Pātāla and in the Heavens, that verily lead to holiness.'

28. Chyāvana said: 'O King! For he whose body, words, and mind have grown pure, to him his every footstep is a place of pilgrimage; he whose heart is impure and defiled, to him the holy Ganges even is a thing more hated and worse than the Kīkata country (Bihār).

29. Every holy place will impart holiness to him whose mind is first pure and deprived of sin.

30-31. O Best of the Daityas! On the banks of the Ganges are situated a good many cities, towns, villages, places to assemble, mines, small villages, living places of the aborigines, the *chāndālas*, and *kaivartas*, the Hūnas, Baṅgas, the Khasas and the other Mlecchas.

32. The inhabitants of the above places drink at their will the holy Ganges water, equivalent to Brahman, and bathe therein and do other works.

33. O King! There not even a single soul becomes pure. What use is a holy place to him whose heart becomes attached to the sensual objects and who can therefore be called a lost soul?

34. Know, O king! the mind as the principal factor in any religious act or in any holy place. He who wants purity, let him first make his own mind pure.

35. The residents in any holy place deceive others and thus incur great sins. The sins committed in a place of pilgrimage can never be removed; they become unending and inexhaustible.

36. As the *indravārunā* fruit is never sweet though fully ripe, so one whose heart is defiled can never be pure, though he bathes hundreds and thousands of times in the waters of a *tīrtha*.

37. He who wants welfare of his own and others, he should first make his mind pure; when his mind becomes pure, then the purity of material things and the purity of conduct can have any effect; then and then only resorting to places of pilgrimages becomes efficacious.

38-39. Always avoid company with the lowest class of persons in the holy places; it is far better to show one's good will and compassion to all the souls (*jīvas*) by one's intellect and by one's acts. You have asked me about the holy places of pilgrimages; I will now tell you those that are the best.

40. O king! The holy Naimiśāraṇya is the first, next Cakratīrtha; next Puṣkaratīrtha; there are many others besides these that cannot be counted. O Best of kings! There are lots of other holy places in this world.'

41-42. Vyāsa said: "O king! Prahlāda, the king of the Daityas, on hearing the Muni's words, became ready to go Naimiśāraṇya and with much gladness exclaimed to his followers, the Daityas: 'O Good Ones! Get up; today we will go to Naimiśāraṇya and we will see the lotus-eyed, yellow-robed Śrī Acyuta, Viṣṇu.'

43. Vyāsa said: "O King! When thus addressed by Prahlāda, the Demons were exceedingly glad; and they all marched out of Pātāla.

44. The Daityas, and Demons all united went to Naimiśāraṇyam and filled with much pleasure, they all bathed on reaching that holy place.

45. There, accompanied by the Daityas, Prahlāda roamed about the sacred places and saw the holy Sarasvatī river and Her pure clean water.

46. The high-souled Prahlāda bathed in the Sarasvatī river and his mind was satisfied.

47. The king of the Daityas was very much pleased and he perform ablutions and charities according to due rites in that most auspicious sacred place of pilgrimage."

Here ends the Eighth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣī Vedavyāsa on going to the Tīrthas.

Chapter IX—the fight between the Ṛṣis and Prahlāda

1. Vyāsa said: "After performing duly his religious rites there, the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu saw before him an unbrageous *pipal* tree.

2-3. There he saw along with the feathers of vultures, many various terrible, glittering arrows, sharpened on a stone, arrayed in due order; and he was surprised to think who could have kept such arrows, well guarded in this very holy hermitage of the Ṛṣis.

4-5. While Prahlāda was thus meditating in his mind, he saw before him, wearing the skin of a black antelope, the two sons of Dharma, the two Munis Nara-Nārāyaṇa, loaded on their heads with high clots of hairs. Before them were placed the two white bows named *śārngam* and *ājagavam*,

the bows of Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively, bearing their qualified marks, as well as their two inexhaustible big quivers.

6-10. The Lord of the Daityas, then, saw those two blessed ones, the two Ṛṣis Nara-Nārāyaṇa, the sons of Dharma, deeply absorbed in meditation. Seeing this, he became very much enraged, his eyes became red, and he began to address them thus: 'O two Ascetics! Has vain arrogance possessed your mind to destroy religion? It is never seen nor even heard that the practice of severe asceticism and the holding of the bows and arrows were carried into effect simultaneously by one man in any of the Four Ages. These two are contradictory things. That may be worthy in the Kaliyuga? This asceticism is fit for the Brāhmaṇas; why, then are bows and arrows held by you? There is an irreconcilable difference between the holding of clotted hairs on the head and the holding in the hand of bows and arrows. Therefore, do you practice religious rites, with feelings befitting your divine positions!'

11. Vyāsa said: "O Descendant of Bharata! On hearing thus the Prahlāda's words, the Nara Ṛṣi said: O Lord of the Daityas! What matters it to you? Why do you, for nothing, trouble yourself with our *tapasyā?*

12. An able man can accomplish anything. It is widely known in the three worlds that we are able to accomplish these two things contemporaneously. O thou of weak understanding!

13. In the battlefield as well as in asceticism, we can show our prowess. What have you got to do with us in these matters? The road before you is unobstructed, you can go wherever you like; why do you brag of your own merits?

14. You are very dull and stupid; what can you understand of a Brāhmiṇical glory that is very rare and attained with great difficulty? Those that want happiness need not meddle with the Brāhmaṇas.'

15-16. Prahlāda said: 'Blunt-headed and vain braggarts are you! When I am present in this *tīrtha*, I who am the upholder of *dharma*, I won't allow you to practice any irreligious things here! O Ascetics! Better show me your skill in fight today.'

17-18. Vyāsa said: "O king! The Ṛṣi Nara on hearing his words replied: 'Give us battle if you are so desirous. O wretched amongst the Asuras! In today's battle, I will knock your head down, and then you shall never in future desire to fight with anybody.'

19-20. Vyāsa said: "On hearing these words, the chief of the Daityas was very much angry and promised to conquer these two self-controlled Ṛṣi ascetics, Nara-Nārāyaṇa by any means whatsoever.

21-22. Thus saying, the Daitya took up his bow and quickly stretched it with arrow and the bow string made a terrible noise. Then Nara, too, stood up with anger with his bows, and began to shoot at Prahlāda lots of sharpened arrows and weapons.

23. The lord of the Daityas quickly selected the arrows, glittering like gold, and with them tore asunder the arrows thrown by Nara. Nara, seeing his arrows cut asunder, became infuriated with anger and began to hurl as quickly lots of other arrows.

24. Prahlāda then cut asunder with arrows of quick velocity, Nara's weapons and struck violently on the breast of Nara. Nara, too, with anger pierced the arms of Prahlāda with five quick arrows.

25. Indra and the other Devas came on their respective airplanes to see their fight and began to give cheers sometimes to Nara and sometime to Prahlāda from above the skies.

26. The Lord of the Daityas taking up his bow, began out of furious anger to hurl various weapons on Nara as incessantly as clouds give rain over the

mountain peaks. The Nara Muni now became very much exhausted and weary, being struck with Prahlāda's arrows.

27. Nārāyaṇa then seeing Nara exhausted, became very much amazed and bolding his unequalled *śārnga* bow, began to shoot arrows shining with golden luster.

28. O Lord of the earth! Then Narāyana and Prahlāda both were desirous to win the victory, and a terrible fight ensued. The Devas gladly poured forth flowers on their heads from the skies.

29. The king of the Daityas got very much enraged and began to hurl arrows with tremendous force. Nārāyaṇa, the son of Dharma, immediately cut asunder those weapons with his very sharp arrows.

30-32. Nārāyaṇa too, threw arrows sharpened under stones with high velocity and very much troubled the lord of the Daityas, who now became very much restless.

33-34. The sky was covered over with arrows and arrows from both the parties, and the day looked like the night. Then the Devas and the Daityas were very much astonished and told each other, "We never saw before a terrible fight like this."

35. Then the Devarṣis, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Pannagas, Vidyādharas and Chāranas were all very much confounded.

36-37. The two Ṛṣis Nārada and Parvata came also to witness their fight; the Devarṣi Nārada told the Parvata Ṛṣi he never saw before such a dreadful fight. There were awful battles with Tārakāsura and Vritrāsūra and also the battle between Hari and Madhukaitava; but they were all inferior and cannot stand in comparison.

38. It seemed that Prahlāda was very powerful; otherwise how could an equal fight last so long a time with such an accomplished person, perfect with all the supernatural powers and of such heroic deeds as Nārāyaṇa.

39-42. Vyāsa said: "O king! Day and night the Daityas and the ascetic Nārāyaṇa went on fighting terribly with each other. Then Nārāyaṇa cut off, with the arrow, the bow of Prahlāda; Prahlāda soon took another bow; the expert-handed Nārāyaṇa quickly broke into two that bow. Thus though Prahlāda's arrows were repeatedly cut asunder, still he began to take up fresh bows and Nārāyaṇa began to cut them repeatedly.

43-44. Thus, then, when all the bows of Prahlāda were destroyed, the Daitya Rājā took up a *parigha* (iron club), became enraged and threw it at Nārāyaṇa's arm. The powerful Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, seeing the dreadful iron club, cut it asunder with nine arrows and pierced Prahlāda with ten arrows.

45-47. Then Prahlāda, enraged, threw the iron *gadā* on Nārāyaṇa's thighs. The exceedingly powerful Dharma's son was not at all agitated and stood firm like a rock and taking up arrows quickly cut asunder the iron *gadā* of the Daitya. Then the visitors were much startled.

48-49. Then Prahlāda, intent on killing his enemy, became very much angry and threw the *śakti* darts, spears and missiles instantly on Nārāyaṇa's thighs with great velocity. Nārāyaṇa with one arrow cut that easily into seven parts and with seven arrows pierced Prāhladā.

50. Thus for one thousand Deva years the terrible fight lasted between Prahlāda and Nārāyaṇa in that hermitage; and the whole universe was struck with surprise.

51-52. Then Gadādhara with yellow robes and four hands quickly came there and called Prahlāda. The son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, Prahlāda, seeing the Lord of Lakṣmī, four-armed Nārāyaṇa with lotus and disc in His hands come there, bowed low, and with folded hands, began to speak to him with great devotion.

53-54. 'O Deva of the Devas! You are the Lord of the universe and devoted to your devotees. O Mādhava! I have fought for full one hundred Deva

years; still I have not not been able to defeat these ascetics. I do not know why. I am surprised at it.'

55-56. Viṣṇu said: 'O Forgiving One! These two Ṛṣis Nara-Nārāyaṇa are the perfect ascetics, self-controlled and born of my *aṁśas*. Therefore you have not been able to defeat them. What wonder is there? O king! Better go now to your Pātāla and keep your steadfast devotion on me. O Intelligent one! Do not quarrel any more with these two ascetics.'

57. Vyāsa said: "O king! The Daitya king Prahlāda then advised by Viṣṇu went out of that place with his Asura followers; and the two Nara-Nārāyaṇas began again to practice their *tapasyā*.

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhagāvatam, the MahāPurāṇam; of eighteen thousand verses, on the fight between the Ṛṣis and Prahlāda by Maharṣī Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—Viṣṇu cursed by Bhṛgu

1-4. Janamejaya said: "O Son of Parāśara! There has arisen a great doubt in my mind on hearing just now your words. These Nara-Nārāyaṇa are the two sons of Dharma; they are ascetics, calm and quiet, the *aṁśas* of Viṣṇu; they reside in a holy place of pilgrimage! They are filled with the *sāttvik* qualities, subsisting always on roots and fruits of the forest, high-souled hermits and truthful. How were they addicted to such warfare? Why had they left their invaluable asceticism? And with what object were they fighting for full one thousand Deva years with Prahlāda?

5. What was the end, O Muni, of their fight with Prahlāda? Kindly explain to me in detail the cause of this warfare.

6. Women, wealth or any other worldly object can be the cause of any quarrel or fight amongst any persons; but in this case, the two ascetics had none of these; how then this idea of fight sprung within their minds?

7-8. And why did they practice such severe austerities? Was it that they had to overpower others, or enjoy pleasures themselves or to reach Heaven that they practiced *tapasyā?* What fruits did they eventually obtain from such penances?

9. They became very lean and thin through their asceticism; still how could they fight full one thousand Deva years without getting fatigued?

10. They were not entangled in this fight for kingdom, or wealth or for women or for any other worldly object; then why did they fight with the high-souled Prahlāda?

11. Having no attachment for any worldly object nor any desire to gain anything therefrom, why did they engage themselves so thoroughly in such painstaking battle?

12. Intelligent persons always do works leading to bliss; they never do painful works; this is the long-standing rule of the world.

13. The two sons of Dharma were the *aṁśas* of Hari, all-knowing and adorned with all qualities; why did they fight, subversive to religion?

14. O Mahārsi! Even the dull and stupid persons in the world won't leave asceticism and *samādhi,* leading to the purification of all desires, to go to these deadly battles.

15. I have heard that Yayāti, the Lord of the earth was dropped from Heaven to this world owing to his *ahaṅkāra*, though he was a virtuous king devoted to charities and sacrifices.

16-17. No sooner Yayāti did Aśvamedha sacrifice, etc., with *ahaṅkāra*, than he was dropped by Indra with thunderbolt in his hands. So one can see

that without *ahaṅkāra* no fight can occur. The ascetics had no bodily strength; therefore if they had to fight, it is through the waste of their *tapasyā* that they could do so."

18. Vyāsa said: "O king! The all-knowing sages that have realized the truth of Dharma declare the threefold *ahaṅkāra* arising from the *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik* qualities to be the causes of this world.

19. How, then, can these two Munis being embodied forego their *ahaṅkāras?* Without any cause, no actions follow; this is quite certain.

20. *Tapas*, charity and sacrifices all originate from the *sāttvik* qualities. But quarrels arise from the Rājasik or Tāmasik qualities.

21. All arise from *ahaṅkāra*, whether good or bad; this is quite certain.

22. There is no other thing that enchains a soul than this *ahaṅkāra*. It is out of *ahaṅkāra* that this Universe is created: how can it be then free from it?

23. O King! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa—even these are with *ahaṅkāra*. Then how can you expect other ordinary Munis to be free from it?

24. Encased with *ahaṅkāra*, this Universe is rolling. Births and death occur repectively through this *karma*.

25. O Lord of the earth, the Devas, birds and men are revolving in this world like the wheel of a chariot.

26. In this wide world who can count how many Avatāras Viṣṇu had to take in all sorts of wombs, good or low?

27. Ordained by the Lord of the Universe, Nārayāna Himself had to take the Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion and the Dwarf incarnations.

28. Vāsudeva Janārdana the Lord, had to undertake countless *avatāras,* births in this world.

29. In the Vaivasvata *manvantara*, the Avatāras of Bhagavān Hari are being mentioned to you. Hear!

30. The all-pervading Lord of the world, the God of the Gods, had to take several incarnations in this world, owing to the curses inflicted by Bhṛgu."

31. The king said: "There has now again arisen another fresh doubt: why was Viṣṇu cursed by Bhṛgu Muni?

32. O Muni! What injury did Hari commit to that Muni, and whereof the Muni Bhṛgu cursed him?"

33-34. Vyāsa said: "Hear, O king! the cause of the curse; I will narrate it to you. In days of yore, the king Hiraṇyakaśipu, the son of Kaśyapa often quarrelled with the Devas; owing to this incessant warfare, the whole universe was much alarmed and perplexed.

35. And when Hiraṇyakaśipu was slain by the Man-Lion incarnation, Prahlāda the tormentor of the foes, continued his enmity towards the Devas and began to annoy them.

36. Thus one-hundred years dreadful battle occurred between the Devas and Prahlāda, to the astonishment of all.

37-38. O king! The Devas fought very hard and were victorious. Prahlāda was defeated and was sorely grieved. Hearing that the Eternal Religion is the best, he handed his kingdom over to his son Bali and went to the Gandhamādan hill to practice *tapasyā*.

39-40. The prosperous Bali, too, on gaining his kingdom, began to quarrel with the Devas and thus the war went on. Ultimately the powerful Indra and the Devas defeated the Asuras.

41-42. O king! Indra, of unequalled prowess, with the aid of Viṣṇu, deprived the Daityas of their kingdom. The defeated Daityas took refuge of their family spiritual guide Śukrācārya and addressed him thus: 'O

Brāhmaṇa! You are endowed with your fiery strength of *tapasyā* and you are now powerful; why are you not lending your helping hands to your Daitya followers? O foremost of the councillors. If you do not help us and save us, we will not be able to stay in this earth and will soon have to go down to Pātāla.'

43-44. Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed by the Daityas, the very kind-hearted Śukrācārya said, 'O Daityas! Do not be afraid; I will protect you by my fire of strength and vigor; and help you with sound counsels and medicines. Be brave and energetic, and cast aside your mental agony and sorrow.'

45-47. Vyāsa said: "O king! The Daityas became fearless under the patronage of Śukrācārya. The Devas had their spies and knew all about these. They held councils with Indra and settled that 'Before the Daityas have time to dislodge us from our Heaven with the *mantra* of Śukrācārya, we will speedily go and attack them. Thus attacked all on a sudden, they will all be slain by us and we will drive them down to the Pātāla.'

48. Thus forming their resolves, fully equipped with arms and weapons, they went out of rage to fight with the Daityas, and orderd by Indra and aided by Viṣṇu, they began to kill the demons.

49. When the Devas were thus slaying the Demons, they got very much terrified and exclaimed 'O Lord! Protect us! Protect us!' and took refuge of Śukrācārya.

50. Śukrācārya, seeing the Daityas very much perplexed and distracted, at once cried aloud out of the influence of his *mantra* 'No fear, no fear.' Then the Devas, on seeing Śukrācārya left the Daityas and fled away to their own places."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Fourth Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣī Vedavyāsa on the curse on Viṣṇu by Bhṛgu.

Chapter XI—Śukrācārya goes to Mahādeva

1. Vyāsa said: "When the Devas retired from the battlefield, Śukrācārya addressed the demons thus: 'O best of the demons! Please hear what had been told to me by Brahmā in days of yore.

2-3. Janārdana Viṣṇu is coming here to slay all the demons. Before He killed Hiraṇyākśa, the king of the *asuras*, in His Boar incarnation. He killed Hiraṇyakaśipu by assuming His Man-Lion appearance; now too, He will kill all the Daityas, no doubt, with great enthusiasm.

4-5. Now my *mantra* force will not be of any avail before Śrī Hari. And without my help you will not be able to conquer the Devas. Therefore, O Demons, wait for some time for me; I will start today to the presence of Śiva Mahādeva to obtain from him the *mantra-śakti*.

6. I will return as early as possible, after getting the *mantra* from Śrī Mahādeva; and with the help of the power of those great *mantras* I will be able to protect you thoroughly.'

7. The Daityas said: 'O best of the Munis! We are now defeated and our forces are well-nigh exhausted; how will we be able to stay on this earth and expect your return for so long a time?

8. Those who were of great strength amongst us all are slain; now we are left very few in number. In this crisis it is not advisable and auspicious for us to remain here in this battlefield.'

9. Śukrācārya said: 'Better you all stay here until I return, getting the requisite *mantra;* remain peaceful and engaged in asceticism.

10. The heroes apply one or other of the following four measures: conciliation, alliance, gifts and bribery, partitions and sowing dissensions, and punishment or open attack according to the conditions of time, place, strength and circumstances.

11. Intelligent and well-wishing persons do serve their enemies even in time of distress; but no sooner they find that their strength and army have increased, than they try at once to kill all their enemies.

12. Now, therefore, pretend your meekness and allegiance and adopt peace and remain in your own place until my arrival.

13. O Demons! I will come back with the *mantra* from Mahādeva. I will fight again with the Devas, by that veritable *mantra* power.'

14. O king! Thus firmly making up his mind to have the *mantra*, Śukrācārya went to Mahādeva.

15. The Dānavas sent Prahlāda to the Devas for conciliation. The Devas regarded Prahlāda truthful and they all trusted him.

16. Prahlāda with Asuras addressed thus the Devas with gentleness and humility:

17. 'O Immortals! We all have abandoned our weapons and armor. Now we desire to wear barks of trees and practice asceticism.'

18. The Devās took Prahlāda's words to be true and desisted from further fighting, were freed of anxiety and felt all delighted.

19. On the Daitya's leaving their weapons, the Gods desisted from battle, went to their respective places and freely gave themselves up to pleasure and amusements.

20. The Daityas controlled themselves and practiced asceticism in Kaśyapa's hermitage, expecting the return of Śukrācārya.

21. Śukrācārya went to Kailāsa and made respectful obeisance to the God Mahādeva. Mahādeva enquired of the cause of his coming.

22. Śukrācārya said: 'I ask for *mantras*, O Deva! from You that are not possessed by Bṛhaspati, for the defeat of the Devas, and the victory of the Asuras.'

23. Vyāsa said: On hearing his words, the all-knowing Śaṅkara Śiva began to think what He would do in this matter:

24. 'Certainly, this is with the revengeful object of attacking the Devas, for their defeat and for the victory of the Asuras that this Muni has come.

25. The Devas ought to be protected by Me.' Thus thinking, Śaṅkara Maheśvara advised him a very difficult *tapasyā* to practice.

26. Full one thousand years he would practice *tapasyā* with feet upwards and head downwards, he will have to inhale the smoke of burnt husk. Then he will get the *mantra* and his desires will be fulfilled.

27. 'That would be done!' Thus saying to Śaṅkara, Śukrācārya practiced that excellent vow, peaceful and inhaling the smoke of husk, to get that *mantra*.

28-29. The Devas came to know that Śukrācārya is practising his vow and the Daityas have become arrogant. They then counselled together.

30. And came to the conclusion, took up weapons and arms and went to the Daityas, ready to fight.

31. The Daityas, seeing the Devas dressed in armor, holding weapons and coming from all sides, became very much afraid and anxious.

32. The Daityas, seeing this all on a sudden, were attacked with fear and began to address the Devas, proud with their army, in words full of good meanings and morals.

33. ‘O Devas! We have abandoned our arms; we are now armless; our spiritual guide is in his *tapasyā*. You gave us words of fearlessness; why then you have come now dressed in full armor and with armies to kill us?

34. O Devas! Where is your truth? And where is your religion acccording to *śruti?* It is stated in *śruti* never to kill the weaponless, the fear-stricken, and the refugees.’

35. The Devas said: ‘You sent your good Śukrācārya, out of pretense to acquire the *mantras;* your asceticism is veiled under a deceitful object. Therefore we will certainly fight with you.

36. Be ready now and dress yourself with your arms and ammunitions: “Lo! Whenever you get any loophole in your enemies, catch hold of it and kill your enemy.” This is your eternal religion.’

37. Vyāsa said: “On thus hearing the reply from the Devas, the Daityas after consideration quit that place and fled away with terror.

38. And they took refuge under the Śukrācārya’s mother. She saw the Daityas very much fearstricken and at once guaranteed to them protection from fear.

39. The mother of Kāvya Śukrācārya said: ‘Don’t fear; don’t fear; cast away fear. O Dānavas! In my presence, no fear can overtake you.

40. The Asuras on hearing her words were free from anxiety and pain and remained in that hermitage, in no way now bewildered or agitated, though they had no arms.

41-42. Here the Devas, seeing the Daityas flying away, pursued them and entering the hermitage were ready to kill the Daityas, not taking into account what strength they gained there. The mother of Śukrācārya warned the Devas not to kill; but in spite of her hindrance, they began to slay the Daityas.

43. Seeing the Daityas thus attacked, the mother was furiously irritated and told them she would make all of them overpowered by sleep by her *tapas* strength, clarified intellectual force.

44. So saying she sent the Goddess of sleep who at once overpowered the Gods and made them all lie down on the grounds senseless. Indra with the other Devas lay there, dumb and miserable.

45. On seeing Indra thus stupefied by sleep, Bhagavān Viṣṇu told Indra to enter into His body. He would then carry him to another place and he will be better.

46-47. Indra entered into the Viṣṇu's body; and under His protection, he became free from sleep and fear. On seeing Indra thus sheltered by Viṣṇu and fearless, the mother of Kāvya spoke.

48. O Indra! I will devour you with Viṣṇu today by my *tapas* force. All the Devas will presently see all this and my extraordinary power.'

49. Vyāsa said: "O king! No sooner the mother spoke thus, than both Indra and Viṣṇu were both stupefied under her magical spell, superior thought power and thorough learning of the art of warfare.

50. The Devas, seeing them very much overpowered and bewildered, were greatly struck with wonder; they became desperate and began to cry aloud.

51. Indra, on hearing the Devas cry aloud, told Viṣṇu, 'O Madhusūdana! I am more bewildered in particular than yourself.

52. O Mādhava! No need of any further consideration. Before this wretch, inflated with pride by her *tapasyā*, burns us, better cause her death as early as possible.'

53. When thus requested by Indra who was very much perplexed, Bhagavān Viṣṇu quickly remembered his Sudarśana disc, casting aside the thought that it is hateful to kill a woman.

54-55. The disc, the ever-obedient weapon of Viṣṇu appeared instantly at his remembrance; and Viṣṇu, becoming angry as prompted by Indra, held the disc in His hand, and hurling it off on the Śukrācārya's mother, severed her head quickly. The god Indra became very glad at this.

56. The Devas became free from sorrow, got very much pleased and heartily exclaimed victory to Hari and worshipped Him and began to chant His praises.

57. Indra and Viṣṇu then became free from all troubles; but they began to fear that Bhṛgu (Śukrācārya's father) would curse them terribly and without fail.

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, on śukrā's going to Mahādeva to get the Mantra.

Chapter XII—Bhṛgu's curse

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! On seeing Viṣṇu killing his wife, and thus committing a dreadful atrocious act, the Bhagavān Bhṛgu was very sorry. He began to tremble with anger and addressed Madhusūdana thus:

2. Bhṛgu said: 'O Viṣṇu! You have done an extremely sinful act. O intelligent one! Knowing it, you have done so; what a great wonder! Nobody dreams of the murder of this Brahmān's daughter; but you have committed it indeed, black and white.

3. O Deva! The Mahārsis declare you to be *sāttvik*, engaged in preservation; Brahmā the creator to be *rājasik* and Śambhu Śiva the destroyer to be *tāmasik*. Why then is the contrary thing visible in this case?

4. Why have you become *tāmasik?* Why have you done this heinous crime? O Viṣṇu! Females are never to be killed. This is a known fact; then why have you killed this woman without any fault?

5-6. You have done a very execrable act. What shall I do to You? It is mete that I would curse you. O Great Sinner! You have pained me very much and made me very weary. I will not curse Indra. You always assume a deceitful appearance and behave like a black cruel serpent; your mind is all full of wickedness; therefore I will curse You.

7. O Janārdana: Those Munis who call you *sāttvik* are fools; I have seen today that your ways are exceptionally vicious and *tāmasik*.

8. O Viṣṇu! I curse you now to take frequent births on earth, suffer very frequently in different wombs, and thus suffer the pains of remaining in the womb.'

9. "O king! Therefore whenever religion subsides in the world, Bhagavān Viṣṇu incarnates frequently in this human world, due to the curse of Bhṛgu."

10. The king said: "O best of the Munis! Did that Mahātmā Bhṛgu again marry and lead a householder's life when his wife was thus killed by the lustrous disc Sudarśana?"

11. Vyāsa said: "O king! The sacrificer Bhṛgu angrily cursed Hari and next took that severed head and quickly placed it over the body as before and said:

12-14. 'O Devī! Viṣṇu has slain you today; I will make you regain your life just now. If I am acquainted with all *dharma,* and if I have practiced these in my life and have spoken truth always, then dost thou regain your life by my religious merit. Let all the Devas witness my power and strength. If I know the True, if I have studied all the *Vedas* and if I have realized the knowledge of the *Vedas*, then I, sprinkling your body with this cold water charged with my *mantras*, will revive you.'

15. Vyāsa said: "O king! Sprinkled by the water by Bhṛgu, his wife regained her life and rose up at once and felt herself glad and smiled.

16. All the persons and living creatures seeing her stand, as if awoken from her sleep, at once exclaimed from all sides 'Well done, well done!' thanked Bhṛgu and his wife very much and highly praised them.

17. Thus seeing the fair complexioned wife regain her life through Bhṛgu, Indra and all the Devas were very much struck with wonder.

18. Indra then adressed the Devas: 'Now the mother of Śukra has regained her life through Bhṛgu; but when Śukrācārya will receive the *mantra* after his severe *tapasyā*, we do not know what terrible harm he would do to us!'

19. Vyāsa said: "O king! Though the deep sleep that overtook Indra had now left him, yet he became very unhappy, remembering the severe asceticism of Śukra's *tapasyā* and his receiving *mantras*.

20. Thinking over deeply in his mind, Indra called his daughter Jayantī and spoke to her with affection.

21-22. 'Go! Daughter! I have given thee over to the ascetic Kāvya. Do this service for me, go to Kāvya (Śukrācārya), help him in his asceticism and bring him under your control. By whatever acts the Muni be pleased, dost thou do at once and please him in every way and thus remove my fear.'

23. The large-eyed beautiful Jayantī, hearing her father's words, went to the hermitage and there saw the Ṛṣi inhaling or drinking the smoke.

24. On seeing the body of the ascetic and remembering her father's words, she brought the leaves of the plantain trees and began to fan him.

25. The intelligent Jayantī with no excitement used to bring the pure, clear, cool and well scented water and place it, with great devotion, before the sage for his drinking.

26. When the sun was over his head, she used to prepare some protection from the sun with her clothes, and thus made shade for him. Thus did she

begin to serve the Muni in various ways, herself remaining steady in her religion.

27. She brought sweet and ripe fruits proper according to the *śāstras* and used to place them before him for his repast.

28. In the performance of his daily duties, she used to collect *kuśa* grass of the span of thumb and forefinger; and flowers, white and yellow and placed them before him.

29. For the Muni's bedding to lie down and sleep, she used to gather soft, green leaves and with them she used to keep his bed ready; and when the Muni laid himself down, she used to fan him gently.

30. Never did she exhibit for fear of curse, any gesture or posture calculated to disturb his mind.

31. The sweet-tongued, thin lady used to praise Śukrācārya in pleasing and favorable terms.

32. When the Muni awoke, she placed water before him to wash his face and hands. Thus serving the Muni, did she stay in the hermitage.

33. The fear-stricken Indra used to send messengers to fathom the mind of that self-controlled Muni.

34. Thus did Jayantī serve for good many years the Muni, being void of anger and observing duly her celibacy.

35. In this way one thousand years passed duly. The God Mahādeva was very pleased and addressed Śukrācārya that He had come to give him boons that he desire.

36-37. The God Mahādeva said: 'Whatever there exists in this universe, whatever you see with your eyes and whatever cannot be described in words, you will be the lord of all these and the conqueror of all. There is no

doubt about this. You cannot be killed by any creature; you will be the ruler of all beings and will be reckoned as the best of the Brāhmaṇas.'

38-39. Vyāsa said: "The God Mahādeva disappeared then and there, after granting him the boons. Then Śukrācārya saw Jayantī and said to her: 'O lady of beautiful hips! Who and whose daughter art thou? What is the desire in your mind? What for you have come here? O one of beautiful thighs! what is your duty?

40. O beautiful-eyed! I am very pleased with all that you have done for me. What do you want? O one of good vows! Ask boons from me; I will grant them even if they be difficult.'

41. On hearing this, Jayantī's face became bright with joy; she said: 'Whatever I desire, you know that already by force of your *tapasyā*.'

42. Kāvya said: 'Your mental desires I know; still mention them yourself particularly; I will do good to you in any way you like; I am pleased with your service.'

43-44. Jayantī said: 'O Brāhmaṇa! I am the daughter of Indra and I am the younger of my brother Jayanta. Father has given me over to you; I now like to live with you. Kindly fulfil my desires now. O blessed one! You better take me and enjoy me according to *dharma*. This is my desire.'

45. Śukrācārya said: 'O thou of large and handsome hips! Better enjoy with me for ten years, according to your liking, without being visible to anybody.'

46-48. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, Śukrācārya went to his home and, according to religious observances, married Jayantī and lived with her for ten years under the shade of Māyā and unobserved by anybody. On the other hand, the Daityas, hearing that Śukrācārya returned home successful getting his desired *mantra*, were very glad and went to his house to pay

their respects to him. But Śukra was then living with Jayantī; hence the Asuras could not see him.

49. Then they got very much dejected, sorry and were drooped in spirit; they searched for him again and again.

50. Not being able to see Śukra under the shade of Māyā, the Daityas were very sorry and got afraid, and then returned to their own residences.

51. On the other hand the Devas, knowing that Śukra was holding intercourse with Jayantī, Indra, the God of Devas, spoke to the Deva Guru Bṛhaspati: 'O Guru! Advise us what to do under the present circumstances and relieve us from the impending difficulties.

52. O Brāhmaṇa, better go today to the Dānavas and do that by which our honor may be maintained. You better put the Dānavas under some charm by your magical spell, and think and do good to us.'

53. On hearing Indra's words and knowing that Śukra is now enjoying with Jayantī, Bṛhaspati went to the Dānavas, putting on the appearance of Śukrācārya.

54. Going to the demons, he called on them very politely and sweetly. The Asuras saw that Śukrācārya had come in their presence.

55. The demons were very glad, bowed down before Śukrācārya but under the *māyik* charm of Bṛhaspati could not make out that he was the false Śukrācārya.

56. Then the false Śukrācārya asked the welfare of the Daityas and said: 'I went so long for your good; I performed severe *tapasyā,* satisfied the God Śambhu and acquired from him the *mantra*, the sacred knowledge, and that I will frankly explain to you.'

57. On hearing this, the Demons were very pleased and, knowing that the *guru* had been successful, were filled with joy.

58. They saluted him with joy and began to live quietly and freely and without pains, having got rid of fear from the Devas."

Here ends the twelfth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Mahārsi Vedavyāsa on Bhṛgu's curse and the dialogue between Śukrācārya and the Daityas.

Chapter XIII—cheating the Daityas

1. The king said: "What did the intelligent Bṛhaspati do after he had assumed falsely the appearance of Śukrācārya, and lived there as the spiritual guide of the demons?

2. O Muni! Bṛhaspati is the *guru* of the Devas; he also devotes his time in studying the *Vedas;* and is the ocean of all knowledge; he is the son of the Maharṣi Angirā and he is himself a Muni. Endorsed with all these good qualifications, how could he deceive the demons?

3-4. In all the religious *śāstras*, Truth is declared to be the essence of *dharma;* and the Supreme Self is attained through Truth, so the wise sages say. How can we expect an ordinary householder to be true when such a man as Bṛhaspati takes recourse to falsehood with the demons?

5. If one acquires the whole Universe as one's wealth, still one does not require anything more than what is required in feeding one's belly; how is it that Bṛhaspati could speak falsehood merely for the sake of his belly?

6. O Muni! The words sung by the ancient virtuous and respectable sages were true and had their corresponding objects denoted by those words; now they employed the term *śista* meaning that there were virtuous, respectable persons as denoted by them. When Bṛhaspati can even commit such condemnable deceitful acts and speak falsehood, we can expect no virtuous respectable persons in the world. Where then do you find the

persons denoted by the word *śista*, sung by the ancient sages? The word *śista* is now meaningless!

7. The Devas are sprung from the *sāttvik* qualities, men from *rājasik* qualities and birds, etc. from the *tāmasik* qualities.

8. When the *guru* of the immortals, incarnate of *sāttvik* qualities can become a liar, how can one expect those who are *rājasik* or *tāmasik* to follow rigorously the truth?

9. Oh! This *trilokī* is all pierced with falsehood! Where is the Religion? And what will be the ultimate goal of all these creatures?

10. When Bhagavān Harī, Brahmā, Indra and the best of the Devas when all can betake to pretext, fraud and trickery and show cleverness in them; what to speak of men!

11-12. O Giver of honor! When all the Devas, Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Viśvamitrā, Bṛhaspati and other ascetic Munis get themselves overpowered by lust and anger, when their intelligence gets destroyed by covetousness and avarice, when they are addicted to vices and are expert in fraud, pretext and trickery, then what fate, alas! can you expect of *dharma,* and what help is there of any religious persons!

13. Alas! When lndra, Agṇi, Moon and Brahmā get overpowered by the strong influence of lust, are in illicit love with others' wives, where is the goodness and virtuous behavior in this *trilokī?*

14. O Sinless One! To whom, then, can we look upon as our spiritual guide, and our advice and lawgivers, when all the Devas and Munis are corrupt with avarice?"

15. Vyāsa said: "O king! Be he Indra, Bṛhaspati, Brahmā, Viṣṇu or Maheśa, whoever is embodied or will put on bodies, he will have to be in touch with the previously mentioned *ahaṅkāra*, and covetousness and other vices due to name-and-form.

16. O king! Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are all attached to sensual objects; and what improper and sinful actions there can be that cannot be committed by persons devoted to sensual objects?

17. It is through cleverness and fraud that anyone devoted to sensual objects can easily make oneself as cleverly free from Māyā; but when difficulty comes, then his trickery gets discovered and the respective qualities hidden in him are brought to bear their respective results. Know, then, the three qualities to be conjointly the cause of all these actions; as without any cause, no action gets visible.

18. These discrepancies in the case of Brahmā and others are caused by the three qualities; their bodies are all created from *pradhāna mahat* and the other 25 Tattvas (essences).

19-20. O king! Brahmā and others are subject to death; then how can you doubt on other things? In advising others, everybody gives, as it were, good and virtuous advices; but when the burden falls upon their own heads, they fall off from their advices and act according to their hidden natures; then they yield to lust, anger, envy, egoism and fascination.

21. No one who is embodied can get rid of passions, born of the three qualities. O king! 'Thus the *trilokī* goes,' is the saying of the Maharṣis.

22-29. This *trilokī*—auspicious, inauspicious and mixed—never gets any serious change; its nature remains always uniform. See, Bhagavān Viṣṇu sometimes practices severe asceticism; Indra, the lord of the Devas sometimes follows the practices of religious sacrifices. Again you find Viṣṇu Bhagavān, full of youth, fond of the *līlā*, enjoying the company of Ramā in Vaikuṇṭha; sometimes He is the ocean of mercy, is fighting dreadful battles with the demons and being severely afflicted with their clusters of arrows; sometimes he gains victories, sometimes he gets defeat through the irony of Fate; thus he gets undoubtedly pleasures and pains. O king! sometimes Nārāyaṇa draws all the worlds into his belly and takes his *yogīk* sleep on the thousand-headed serpent Śeśa, and again he gets himself

awakened by Prakṛti. O king! Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, Indra, the Devas, and Munis—all of them, live up to the limit of their ordained time and when the time of *pralaya*, the Universal dissolution, ends, this whole Universe, moving and nonmoving, again comes into existence as before; there is no doubt about this. O king, at the expiry of the ordained time, Brahmā and all others will die, no doubt.

30-31. Again, in due course, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa and the other Devas come out and assume bodies and get all the passions, lust, etc. as ordained. O King! You need not be astonished; this *trilokī* always goes on accompanied by lust, anger, etc.

32-34. Persons free from lust, anger and other passions are very rare in this world. He who is afraid of this world does not marry, and thus being free from the attachments to any worldly object, becomes free and roams fearless. The Moon stole away the wife of Bṛhaspati, and Bṛhaspati himself stole away the wife of his younger brother. Thus in this wheel of *saṁsāra*, all the creatures are ever impassioned with attachment, avarice, etc.

35. The householder can never expect to obtain freedom. Therefore those who want to be free should carefully relinquish the idea of the stability of the world and worship the Eternal Mother, Full with *sat, cit* and *ānandam*.

36. This world, moving and unmoving, O Maheśānī, rolls in madness, overpowered by Her Māyā.

37. Intelligent persons worshipping Her, trample down the three qualities and become free. O king! No other Path exists for Freedom.

38-39. Until one gets the Grace from the Maheśānī, one never gets happiness. True mercy is not found anywhere else but from Her. Then one should worship the All-merciful, being of pure heart. For Her worship leads to freedom, even in this bodily life.

40. He who getting a human frame fails to worship Maheśānī, falls down from the highest rung of the ladder. This is my opinion.

41-42. This Universe, composed of the three qualities, is encompassed with *ahaṅkāra* and fastened to untruth; therefore freedom can never be expected without the worship of that potent Goddess, O Muni! O king! Renounce every worldly object and serve the Goddess Bhuvaneśvarī; this is the highest duty of all."

43. The king said: "What did, then, the Devaguru do in the disguise of Śukrācārya? And when did the real Śukrācārya come there? O respected Muni! Speak on these points."

44. Vyāsa said: "Please hear what the disguised Bṛhaspati in the shape of Śukrācārya did afterwards.

45. The demons were made to understand clearly by Bṛhaspati; and then they took him for Śukrācārya and placed implicit faith on him and began to think of him and him alone.

46. The Daityas, enchanted and deceived by the magic of Bṛhaspati, took his refuge for acquiring the knowledge from him, since they mistook him for Śukrācārya. Who is there that is not enchanted by the idea of gaining something?

47. On the other hand, when the term of ten years was over, Śukrācārya, the real *guru* of the Daityas, ceased enjoying Jayantī and began to remember his disciples, the Daityas.

48. He now began to think that 'My disciples, the Daityas, are expecting every instant my return; and I would now go and see them, bewildered with fear.

49-51. They are my devotees and I ought to do such that they might not be afraid of the Devas.' And then he exclaimed to Jayantī, 'O beautiful one! Let

my sons take the shelter of the Gods; your term of ten years is today over; I now go therefore, to see my disciples; soon I will again come to you.'

52. 'Be it so,' replied Jayantī, the best of those who know religion, 'you can go where you like; I am not to destroy your *dharma*.'

53-54. Hearing these words, Śukrācārya went hurriedly to the demons and saw the Devaguru Bṛhaspati sitting before them in the guise of Śukrācārya. He was explaining to them the Jaina doctrines, compiled by himself and finding fault with the act of envy, taking revenge, killing and cursing the sacrifices, etc.

55. He was telling them 'O Enemies of Gods! Truly, I am telling you words that will, no doubt, prove good to you. Non-killing is the highest virtue; even the enemies ought never to be killed.

56. It is the Brāhmaṇas, addicted to enjoyments and pleasures of the senses, who want to satisfy their tastes and pleasures that are found in the *Vedas'* injunctions to kill animals; but there is no virtue higher than non-killing animals.'

57-58. O king! Śukrācārya was perfectly astonished to hear Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the Devas, speaking against the *Vedas* and began to think that 'Bṛhaspati is certainly my enemy. My disciples have been duped by this cheat; there is no doubt about this.

59. Fie to avarice! It is the seed of sin; very strong and the veritable gate to hell; even Bṛhaspati, the guru of the Devas, is speaking lies, bound under the influence of this heinous avarice!

60. Oh! What wonder is this that the *guru* of the Devas, who is the promulgator of all the religious *śāstras* and whose word is accepted as the final decision, is now expounding the doctrines of atheists.

61. When Bṛhaspati can become the expounder of atheistic doctrines impelled by covetousness, what to speak of those whose minds are not pure and whose intelligence is not sharp?

62. This Deva *guru*, though a Brāhmaṇa, is acting today like a rogue, wanting to take away all and is deceiving my disciples the Daityas, who have been confounded by his magic.'

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses on cheating the Daityas by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the Daityas get back Śukrācārya

1. Vyāsa said: "Thus arguing in his mind, Śukrācārya smilingly said to the Daityas: 'O Daityas! what for have you all been cheated by Bṛhaspati, the guru of the Devas, in my guise.

2. I am Śukrācārya; you are my disciples; this man is Bṛhaspati, wanting to serve the Gods. He has cheated you, there is no doubt about this.

3. This vain villainous person has assumed my form; do not put the least faith in his words. O Daityas! You are my disciples, follow unto me; leave this Bṛhaspati, vain and arrogant.'

4. The Daityas, on hearing his words were struck with wonder at the resemblance of the two personages and came to the conclusion that 'the person just come is the real Śukrācārya.'

5. Then Bṛhaspati, the false Śukrācārya explained to the Daityas in plain and enchanting words that 'The second man just come is the Deva-*guru* Bṛhaspati; he has come here in my guise. His object is to cheat you.

6. He has come here to cheat you and serve the purpose of the Devas; do not believe in his words.

7. What knowledge I have acquired from the God Śambhu, I am teaching it to you; I will make you, no doubt, victorious in the battle with the Devas.'

8. Thus the Daityas, hearing the words of the false Śukrācārya, thought the false one to be real and placed implicit reliance in his words.

9. The real Śukrācārya then explained them as much as he could; but the Daityas, owing to the magic of the false Śukrācārya and to the wonderful effect of time, did not hear his words.

10. The Daityas thus convinced said to the real Śukrācārya, 'This man before us is our guru for our welfare and enlightenment. He is the foremost religious Śukrācārya; for ten years continuously he is giving us advice. You are not our *guru;* you appear fictitious and false; you better leave this place and go away.'

11. The dull-brained Daityas repeatedly told to Śukrācārya the reproachful words and bowed down to the false Śukrācārya; and saluting, him, gladly welcomed him as their guru.

12-14. The real Śukrācārya, seeing the Daityas exceedingly attached to Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the Devas, and deceived by his words, cursed them out of anger and said: 'As you have not taken my words though I have explained everything to you, you would lose your knowledge and get defeat.

15. As you have shown disrespect towards me, you will get the fruits of it at an early date and will then understand the deceitful behaviors of that Deva-*guru*.'

16. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, Śukrācārya hurriedly went away, infuriated with anger. Bṛhaspati was glad and remained there with his mind calm."

17-19. Bṛhaspati then knowing the Daityas cursed by Śukrācārya, assumed his real appearance, left that place and hurriedly returned to Indra. He began to say 'I have undoubtedly succeeded in my undertaking; the

Daityas have been cursed and left by me too. They are now helpless; so, O Good Suras! I have made them cursed, you would better now try to fight with them.’

20-21. Indra heard their Guru and became very glad; all the other Devas were glad and worshipped him. They held another cabinet, secret council, how to fight with the Daityas; and, then, all uniting together marched out in battle against the Asuras.

22. Seeing that the powerful Devas are marching towards them ready to fight and knowing their false *guru* had fled, the Daityas became very anxious.

23. They told each other: ‘Alas! We were enchanted by the Deva-*guru;* the high-souled Śukrācārya angrily left us; now it is our incumbent duty to satisfy him.

24. That vicious, dirty inside and pure outside, hypocrite Paṇḍita Deva *guru*, who used to go to his brother’s wife, has really cheated and has quit us.

25. What are we to do now? where to go? How to satiate now the anger of Śukrā so that he might be glad and help us?

26. Thus pondering, they all unitedly, shuddering with fear, again went to Śukrācārya, keeping Prahlāda in front of them.

27. They all bowed down at the feet of their *guru;* Śukrā remained silent; then, bursting with anger and with eyes red, told them:

28. ‘You were all warned by me that you were being cheated by the *māyā* of Bṛhaspati; you did not take my word as worth hearing, though unselfish, pure and leading to your welfare.

29. Rather you were influenced by him and infatuated with vanity, you insulted me; now you will have to bear undoubtedly the effects of that *karma*.

30. You are now vitiated from the path of your welfare; go now where that disguised cheat resides for the welfare of the Gods; know me not to be a cheat like him.'

31. Vyāsa said: "O king! When Śukrā finished saying his uncertain words, Prahlāda clasped his feet and began to say thus:

32. Prahlāda said: 'O our *guru* Bhārgava! Today we have come to you in a very distressed condition! O Omniscient! we are your disciples; we are your good sons; you ought not to quit us.

33. On your departure to get the *mantra*, that hypocrite, vicious Bṛhaspati getting the opportunity, falsely assumed your appearance and cheated us.

34. Peaceful persons do not take any offence committed with ignorance. You know everything; you know very well that our hearts are devoted to thee and to thee alone. There is no need of telling anything further to you.

35. O Highly Intelligent One! By your *tapas*, know our inner minds and relinquish your anger. The sages say that the anger of the saints is not lasting.

36. O Muni! Water is naturally cool; when in contact with fire it gets hot; but, when the heat is removed, it gets cold shortly after.

37. O observer of good vows! Anger is like *chāndala*; sages therefore quit it. Our prayer to you is that you leave your anger and be pleased with us.

38. If you do not quit your anger and if you make us overpowered with grief and sorrow, O blessed one! We, being abandoned by you, will go down to Pātāla.'

39. Vyāsa said: "Bhārgava heard Prahlāda's words and, with his intuitioned eye, came to see the proper state of affairs, was pleased and lovingly said:

40. 'You will not have to fear nor to enter into the Pātāla. You are my Yajamānas; I will certainly protect you all by my never-failing *mantra* power.

41. O knower of religion! What Brahmā of yore told me, I am now telling you accordingly. Hear my truthful words, leading to your welfare.

42. Whatever is inevitable, doomed to pass, must come to pass, be it auspicious or inauspicious. No one is able in this world to go against the current of Fate.

43. Under the influence of Time you are now deprived of strength, therefore you will have to suffer defeat at the hands of the Devas and you will have to go once again to Pātāla.

44-45. Brahmā said: 'When your time to enjoy the sovereignty of the *trilokī* had come, you enjoyed the kingdoms of the *trilokī* with all its wealth and power. You attacked the Devas and, helped by Time, had been able to trample them under your feet and held your sovereignty for full ten *yugas* and enjoyed the pleasures without any hitch.

46. You will regain this kingdom in the Sāvarnik *manvantara*. Then Bali will come in your family as the grandson of Prahlāda, will conquer the *trilokī* and will get name and fame throughout his kingdom.

47-48. When the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha had incarnated as Vāmana and stolen away the kingdom of Bali, then the Janārdan Viṣṇu told Bali, the king of the Demons that "I have taken away your kingdom by pretext to serve the purpose of the Gods; you will become Indra, no doubt, in the coming Sāvarnika *manvantara*."

49. Bhārgava said: 'According to the sayings of Śrī Bhagavān Hari, your grandson Bali is now invisible to all creatures and is now passing away his time, very much terror-stricken.

50-51. Being afraid of Indra, he is now staying in a lonely house as an ass. One day Indra on seeing him enquired of him, in various ways, the cause of his assuming that ass-body.

52. O Lord of the Daityas! You have always enjoyed pleasures of all the world; you are the ruler of the Daityas; you ruled over all the worlds; do you not feel shame now in thus assuming this ass body?' The Lord of the Daityas, hearing him, spoke thus.

53-54. 'O Indra, there is nothing to be sorry in these matters. When the most powerful Viṣṇu can assume fish and tortoise incarnations, then what wonder is there that I, by virtue of the force of Time, am now staying as an ass? When you had murdered a Brāhmaṇa, you too had hid yourself in the Mānasa lake in the lotuses; similarly today distressed, I am staying here in this ass body.

55. O Indra! What sorrow or happiness can be to a person who is under the control of Fate? To him everything is alike; for whatever the Time wishes, It can act accordingly.'

56. Bhārgava said to Prahlāda: 'Both persons Bali and Indra got enlightenment at the mutual conversations; and they went away to their places at their own will.'

57. O Lord of the Asuras! I have narrated to you this story indicating how powerful is the Time. Know that the Devas and Daityas and all the human beings and this whole universe is under that Great Fate."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses on the Daityas getting back their Śukrācārya, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—truce of the Daityas and the Devas

1. Vyāsa said: "O king Janamejaya! Prahlāda was glad to hear the above words of the high-souled Bhārgava.

2. Knowing Fate to be the strongest, he addressed the Daityas: 'Never in this battle will victory be ours.'

3-5. Then the victorious demons, infatuated with pride, told Prahlāda: 'What is Fate? We do not recognize it. We ought to fight. O our Lord: Fate reigns over those that are idle, not energetic. Has Fate any shape? Who has created it? Has anybody seen Fate? So let us gather strength and fight. You are very intelligent and all-knowing; it is proper that you should take our lead in the fight.'

6. O king! When the Daityas spoke thus, Prahlāda, the great Destroyer of enemies, became the general and challenged the Devas to fight.

7. On seeing the Asuras in the battlefield, the Devas, dressed with arms and weapons, began to fight with them.

8. For full one-hundred years the dreadful battle was fought between Indra and Prahlāda; on seeing this, the Munis were astonished.

9. O king! In this fearful battle, the Daityas with their general Prahlāda, the followers of Śukrācārya, got the victory.

10. Then Indra, advised by their Guru Bṛhaspati, began to remember the Goddess of the Universe—the Most High, the Giver of welfare, the Destroyer of all sorrows and calamities, and the Bestower of freedom—worship Her and sing hymns to Her with great devotion.

11-12. Indra said: 'Victory be to the name of the Goddess Mahā-māyā, the Eternal Mother, the Holder of the trident! Holder of conchshell, disc, club, and lotus, the Giver of "no fear." Salutation to Thee, the Goddess of the Universe; Thou art the Supreme Heroine in everything that relates to force,

that is described in the *śakti-darśana śāstras*. Thou art the ten *tattvas*, Thou art the Mother, Thou art the *mahā-vidyā* (the Supreme Knowledge).

13. O World Mother! Thou art the Mahā-Kuṇḍalinī (the great Serpent Fire); thou art the everlasting *saccidānanda* (existence, intelligence and bliss); Thou art the Deity of the vital Fire (*prāṇa*); Thou art the Deity of the *agṇihotra* (the Sacred Fire); Thou art the Holy Flame, burning always in the ethereal space in the Heart; Salutation to Thee!

14. Thou dwellest within the five bodily sheaths (*annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñāṇamaya* and *ānandamāyā*). Thou art the indweller of the *ānandamaya-koṣa*, Thou art of the nature of Puccha Brahman, the end of Brahman. Thou art the Deity of all, the *ānanda* unblown, O Mother! Thou art the Deity of all the *Upaniṣads*.

15. O Mother! Be pleased unto us; we have become powerless; protect us, O Mother! we are defeated by the Daityas; O Goddess! Thou art endowed with all the powers, Thou art our sole refuge in this Universe, in times of distress, and Thou art the only one, strong and capable to remove all our dangers.

16. O Goddess! Those who incessantly meditate on Thee are really happy and those that do not meditate on Thee, their fear, and sorrows are never removed; those that want ultimate freedom from bondage and who meditate on Thee always; those pure souls, being free from *ahaṅkāra* and attachment go, no doubt, beyond this ocean of world.

17. O World Mother! Thy prowess is ever manifested whenever protection is demanded; You always come forward and relieve the distressed; You are the great destroyer! Thou art the time incarnate of all these worlds; O Mother! We are fools; how can we appreciate your qualities?

18. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, I myself, Sun, Yama, Varuṇa, Fire, Air, the high-minded Munis, *āgama*, *nigama*, the *Tantras* and the *Vedas* are quite unable to realize Your unequalled prowess; salutation to Thy feet.

19. Those are blessed that are devoted to Thee; They are the great souls; they always dive in the ocean of bliss, being always free from the fangs of this *saṁsāra*. Those who are not Your devotees cannot cross this Ocean of *saṁsāra*, where birth and death are the billows.

20. O Goddess! Those that are always fanned by the white *cāmaras* and those that travel always in cars, in their previous births worshipped Thee with various things; therefore they have acquired the effects of their meritorious deeds; this is my opinion.

21. Those who are always worshipped amongst the human beings, who go on nice elephants, who are surrounded by pleasures and enjoy the lovely companions of beautiful coquettish women, who go surrounded by soldiers, O Goddess! I consider they worshipped Thee in their previous births, and they are now enjoying fruits of their past deeds.'

22-23. Vyāsa said: "Thus praised by Indra, the Goddess of the Universe with four arms hurriedly appeared there mounted on a Lion. Conchshell, disc, club, and lotuses were held by the beautiful-eyed Goddess in Her four hands, wearing a red apparel and ornamented with divine garlands.

24. The Goddess being pleased addressed the Devas with sweet words, 'Cast off your fear. O Devas! I will see presently all about your welfare.'

25. Addressing the Devas thus, the Divine Mother mounted on a Lion, went hurriedly to the place where the demons were waiting, infatuated with pride.

26. All the Daityas with their general Prahlāda saw the Goddess before them and were terrified and began to address each other, 'What are we to do now?

27-28. This Caṇḍīkā Goddess has come here to protect the Devas. She destroyed Mahiṣāsura and Caṇḍa Muṇḍa; it was She that killed, in days of yore, Madhukaitava with evil look.

29-30. Seeing the demons thus full of sorrowful thoughts, Prahlāda addressed the Daityas: 'It is better not to fight but let us fly away alltogether.' Then the Daitya Namuchi told the Daityas ready to fly away, 'If you fly away, this World Mother will instantly kill you all with weapons in Her hands.

31. Do that by which we can protect ourselves. Let us worship the Goddess of the Universe, and getting Her permission, we will go this very day to Pātāla.'

32. Prahlāda said, 'I will worship the Goddess Mahā-māyā, the Creatrix, Preservrix and Destructrix of the Universe, the World Mother, and the Assurer of safety to Her devotees.'

33. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, the knower of the highest knowledge, Prahlāda, the devotee of Viṣṇu, began to sing hymns with folded hands in praise of the Goddess, the Upholdress of the Universe:

34. 'I bow down to Thee, the incarnate of the mantra *hṛīṁ*, the Refuge of all, and within Whom this whole Universe, moving and unmoving, is appearing untruly, as a snake is mistaken for a garland of flowers.

35. O Goddess! All these Universes, moving and unmoving, have sprung from Thee; Brahmā, Viṣṇu and others are Creators, Preservers in name only; Thou hast created them all.

36. O Mahā-māyā! You are the Divine Mother of all! When You have created the Asuras and the Suras, how can you then see any difference between the Devas and the Daityas?

37. As a Mother makes no distinction between her good sons and bad sons, so You are not to make any difference between us and the Devas; this is our prayer to you.

38. O Goddess! You have been sung in all the *Purāṇas* as the World Mother; therefore, O Mother! We are your sons just as the Devas are.

39. O Mother! As they have got their interests, so we too have got our interests; therefore there is no difference between he Daityas and the Devas. Therefore if anyone makes any difference, it is due to the subtle error.

40. O Goddess! As we are attached to wealth, wives, and other pleasures of the senses, so the gods are; O Goddess! How then can any difference exist between them and us?

41. O Mother! They are the sons of Maharṣi Kaśyapa; we also are his sons; Therefore you cannot have partiality for them before us.

42. O World Mother! In You no such difference is visible anywhere. Therefore do You here preserve equality amongst us both.

43. The Suras and Asuras all have sprung from the permutations and combinations of the three qualities! Then how the Devas, being embodied, can possess more qualities than us?

44. Every embodied soul possesses always cupidity, anger, covetousness; how then can one expect to remain without any quarrels with others?

45. We think that it is all sport with You to see our opinions different, rather contradictory, it is You who got us involved in quarrels with each other, and it is Your pleasure to witness how we fight against each other.

46. Sinless one! O Cāmunde! Were You not so fond to see our fight, how then, being brothers, are we at war against each other? Certainly it is Your Divine Sport.

47. O Goddess! I know what is religion, I know who is Indra. It is the very idea to enjoy these sensual pleasures that is the only cause of our incessant quarrels.

48. O Mother! You are the sole Ruler of this *saṁsāra;* no sensible man can carry out the words of a man who yearns for something. O Mother, You are the only one that is desireless; so we can obey your words.

49. O Mother! Once the Devas and the Asuras conjointly churned the ocean. At that time Viṣṇu, on the plea of distributing the jewels and ambrosial nectar, incurred quarrels amongst them.

50. O Mother! You have made him the Preserver and Controller of the Universe and the Spiritual Guide of the world. And it was He who took away the Goddess Lakṣmī, the beautiful lady amongst the Deva women.

51. Indra, the Lord of the Gods, took the elephant named Airāvat, the flower Pārijāt, the Heavenly Cow yielding all desires, and the horse Uccaiśravā. Thus, through the desires and devices of Viṣṇu, they got the excellent things.

52. O! What a wonder is this that the Devas were considered holy persons, after they had committed such unholy acts; no doubt the Devas had done a very heinous crime. O Goddess! You can judge Yourself what is the just and unjust thing in this case.

53. What is Religion? And where is Religion? And what are the acts done by a religious man? What is uprightness, justice, and purity? You better examine which party has observed virtue! Who has shown uprightness, justice and parity? To whom victory and defeat are due? You are the only one capable to judge all these things.

54-55. Alas! Whom to tell all the conclusions arrived at in the *Mīmāṁsakas?* If anyone considers, one will find the world is the field of dissension and quarrel; the argumentators look to the logical reasoning only; followers of the *Vedas* look to the rules and regulations only; these so-called men of gross ideas acknowledge that this world is created and preserved by the One only, and yet they quarrel amongst each other.

56-57. If there be One and only One Lord of this wide infinite *saṁsāra*, then why would there be differences and quarrels amongst each other? Why is there not seen any agreement in opinion, and why do the *śāstras* differ and

why are there so many differences in the opinions held by the knowers of the *Vedas?*

58. O Goddess! This whole Universe, moving and unmoving is selfish; hence arise so many differences between several opinions. There was no one unselfish in this world, and there would be no unselfish persons born hereafter.

59-64. Look! The Moon stole away perforce knowingly the wife of Bṛhaspati; Indra, knowing what is religion stole away the wife of Gautama; Bṛhaspati enjoyed forcibly the wife of his younger brother; and also he outraged his elder brother's wife in her pregnant state, cursed the boy in the womb and made him blind. What more to say than Viṣṇu, all full of *sāttvik* qualities, severed perforce the head of Rāhu. O Mother! Look to the case of my grandson Bali who used to pay due respects to all, who was the foremost amongst the virtuous, observer of rigorous truth, performer of sacrifices, liberal, peaceful, all-knowing. The pretender Hari, taking the form of a dwarf in his Vāmana incarnation, deceived Bali and took away all his kingdoms. Alas! Still the intelligent good persons reckon the Deva Viṣṇu as the preserver of Religion. What a wonder! Those who are flatterers become victorious in this world; and defeat come to those that speak of *dharma*.

65. O Goddess! You are the Mother of all the worlds; do whatever You like. But You should know that the demons are all under Your protection; kill or save us as You like.'

66. The Devī said: 'O demons! Leave you all the anger arising from this warfare, go without any fear to Pātāla and live there at your ease and happiness.

67. Better now wait on Time, to see whether you will get auspicious or inauspicious fruits for your deeds. Know whoever is desireless and unattached, to him happiness is always and everywhere.

68. Whose mind is avaricious, he does not get peace and happiness, even if he acquires the *trilokī*. Even in the golden age, avaricious persons did not get happiness, though they certainly acquired the fruits of their actions.

69. Therefore get yourselves freed of your sins; obey My order, leave the earth and go down to Pātāla.'

70. Vyāsa said: "On hearing the Devī's words, the demons obeyed. Bowing at Her feet and preserved by Her, they went to Pātāla.

71. Then the Devī disappeared, and the Devas went away to their own homes. Thus the Devas and the Daityas, abandoning their feelings of enmity towards each other, lived in peace. O King! He who hears this fact gets himself freed from all sorts of calamities and reaches the Highest Peace."

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, on the truce between the Daityas and Devas and on their departures with peace, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—the Avatāras of Viṣṇu and their deeds

1-2. Janamejaya said: "O best of Munis! How did Viṣṇu, of wonderful deeds, get his incarnations owing to the curse cast on Him by Bhṛgu? what were His different incarnations in different Manvantaras respectively? O Thou, well versed in religion! O Brāhmaṇa! Kindly narrate those sin-destroying deeds of Hari in His several incarnations, that are the source of happiness, peace and welfare to all humanity."

3. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hear, I am narrating to you the incarnations of Śrī Bhagavān Hari which He had in the several *manvantaras* and in the several *yugas* respectively.

4. I will tell you now, in brief, what forms He took and what deeds He did in the various incarnations.

5. In the Cāksusa-*manvantara*, Bhagavān Hari took the incarnation of Dharma; and the two sons of Dharma, Nara-Nārāyaṇa, were widely celebrated in this world.

6. Then, in the present Vaīvasvata-*manvantara*, under the reign of Vaīvasvata Manu in the second *yuga*, Bhagavān Hari incarnated as Dattātreya, in the shape of the son of Atrī Ṛṣi.

7. Anasūyā the wife of Atrī, was desirous to have the three Devas Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra as her sons; and in fulfilment of her desire the Devas took their births in her womb.

8. Anasūyā, was foremost amongst the chaste and virtuous women and on her praying, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra the trimūrti at once agreed to become her sons.

9. Brahmā was born as Soma, Hari was born as Dattātreya and Rudra was born as Durvāsā.

10. In the fourth *yuga*, the Bhagavān assumed the beautiful double form in one, the upper part resembling a lion and the lower part a human being, to accomplish the noble purpose of the Devas.

11. It was to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu that the Bhagavān Hari assumed this appearance, wonderful even to the Devas.

12. In the Tretā-yuga, the superior and the best of all the *yugas*, Bhagavān incarnated as Vāmana (the dwarf), the son of Maharṣi Kaśyapa, to curb the power of Bali.

13. The Dwarf Hari took the kingdom of Bali away by pretext while he was performing a sacrifice, and sent him down to Pātāla (the lower regions).

14. Afterwards, in the nineteenth *yuga*, known as the Tretā-yuga, Śrī Bhagavān Hari incarnated as Paraśurāma, very powerful and the son of Jamadagnī Ṛṣi.

15. He was very beautiful and graceful in his body, truthful and the conqueror of his senses. He extirpated the Kṣatriya race and gave the whole world over to the high-minded Ṛṣi Kaśyapa.

16. O king! He is the Paraśurāma, the sin-destroyer, the incarnation of Hari, and the doer of wonderful deeds.

17-20. After that the Bhagavān Hari incarnated as Rāma, the son of Daśaratha. Next in the twenty-eighth Dvāpara-yuga, He incarnated as the very powerful Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *aṁśas* of Nara-Nārāyaṇa. To remove the burden of the earth, these two were born; and they fought deadly battles in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. O king! Thus the several incarnations of Hari arose, according to the requirements of Prakṛti. O King! These three worlds are under the control of Prakṛti.

21. Whatever the Prakṛti wishes at any time, She can fashion the world in that way. And She does this incessantly in accordance with the Word Divine, the highest *śakti*, to please the Puruṣa without any cessation.

22-23. In days of yore, the most ancient Bhagavān, the Highest, above all the qualities of Māyā, formless, all-pervading, difficult to be conceived, without any decay, self-supporting, without any want, created these worlds, moving and unmoving and He manifested Himself as the *trimūrti* —Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa—the forms of the three qualities *sāttva, rājas* and *tāmas*, which is called the Highest Prakṛti.

24. This all-auspicious Prakṛti shines differently according to the differences in time and circumstances. This threefold Prakṛti, the Great Enchantress of the world, is creating, preserving the worlds and is destroying them at the end of the *kalpas*.

25. O King! Whenever there takes place the union with this Prakṛti, Brahmā creates, Viṣṇu preserves, and the all-auspicious God Śaṅkara destroys the worlds.

26. It was She That gave birth to Kākutstha, the best of the kings; and to conquer the Dānavas, She placed him at a certain place.

27. O king! Thus all men controlled by the Great Law in this world, enjoy sometimes the pleasures, enjoy sometimes pains and thus exist in the world."

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, on the Birth of the several Avatāras of Viṣṇu and their deeds.

Chapter XVII—questions asked by Janamejaya

1. Janamejaya said: "O Muni! You told before that the heavenly prostitutes sent by Indra in the hermitage of Nara-Nārāyaṇa became lustful and desired to live with Nārāyaṇa only, whose heart was calm and quiet.

2. At that moment when Nārāyaṇa was about to curse them, his brother Nara desisted him from taking that step.

3-4. Now I ask you, what did that triumphant Nārāyaṇa Muni do, in the critical juncture, when he was repeatedly asked by those prostitutes, sent by lndra, to satisfy their lust?

5. O Grandsire! I am very eager to know the deeds of Nārāyaṇa, leading to one's freedom. Kindly describe in detail and fulfill my wishes."

6. Vyāsa said: "Hear, O king! I am describing to you in detail, what that high-souled son of Dharma did.

7. When Nārāyaṇa Hari was ready to curse them, the Ṛṣi Nara, seeing this, consoled him and desisted him.

8. Then the great sage, the ascetic son of Dharma, Nārāyaṇa, leaving aside his anger, began to address them in sweet words with smiling countenance:

9-10. 'O fair women! We have determined to practice asceticism in this life; it does not behove us to accept any wife; therefore show your kindness unto us and go back to your Heaven. You would better think that those who know what is religion, never desire to break the vow of another.

11. O beautiful-eyed ones! In sexual pleasure, the delightful feeling of passionate joy is requisite; and we are wanting in those feelings; then how can we effect that union?

12. No action can come out of no cause; this is all clear. The poets say that the sexual power and pleasure is the feeling, the mental attitude that corresponds; and that is the only thing that lasts. And we have no desire for that.

13. However my limbs are all very graceful, I am very fortunate and blessed in this world, otherwise how can I be the object of your sincere love towards me?

14. You all are very fortunate; therefore do now show this mercy unto me: do not break my vow. I pray now that, in a subsequent birth, I may become your husband.

15-16. O large-eyed fair women! In the twenty-eighth Dvāpara Yuga, I will certainly incarnate on earth to effect the purpose of the Devas; then you all also would respectively incarnate as the daughters of kings and would also become my wives.'

17. Nārāyaṇa thus consented to marry them in some other next birth; and consoling them, made them go back to their Heavens. They also abandoned their mental disquietude and, on reaching back to Heavens, explained everything to Indra.

18-19. Indra heard from these heavenly women what the two two Ṛṣis did and saw before him Urvaśī and other women created by Nārāyaṇa from his thighs, etc., and began to extol the merits of the high-souled Nārāyaṇa.

20. Indra said: 'O! How wonderful is the patience of the Muni! What is the wonderful influence of his *tapas!* Oh! He has created, by the sheer force of his *tapas*, Urvaśī and these fair women, unrivalled for their beauties, from his thighs.'

21. The Lord of the Devas thus extolled his merits and became freed from his anxieties. The virtuous Nārāyaṇa, too, devoted himself to the practice of his *tapasyā*.

23. O king! Thus I have described to you, in detail, all the wonderful accounts regarding Nara-Nārāyaṇa. O Superior in the descendants of Bharata! These two, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, afterwards incarnated themselves due to Bhṛgu's curse as the two great heroes Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, to relieve the burden of the earth."

24. The king said: "O respectful Muni! Now describe in detail the life of the Kṛṣṇa-*avatar* and dispel my mental doubt.

25-26. O best of the Munis! Why were Vasudeva and Devakī, who were chosen by the very powerful Hari and Ananta as their parents, doomed to so many miseries and afflictions? Why had these parents to remain for good many years in the prison of Kaṁsa, who pleased directly by their *tapasyā* that Bhagavān Janārdana?

27. Why did Kṛṣṇa taking his birth at Mathurā, go to Gokula? Also what was his object to go to Dvārakā, situated in the ocean, when he killed the enemy Kaṁsa?

28. Also why did his father, mother and relatives leave their holy places of residence and go abroad to live in a wretched old country?

29-31. Why was the Yadu race destroyed by the curse from a Brāhmaṇa? How did Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva finally leave His body after He had relieved the burden of the earth and was about to enter into His Heaven? The evildoers of the earth were slain by Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, of unequalled

prowess; but how was it that those who plundered the wives of Śrī Hari were not at all punished by Him?

32-33. The great personages Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Karṇa, the king Vālhīka, Virāta, Vikarṇa, Dhṛṣṭadyumna and the king Somadatta were destroyed for relieving the burden of the earth; but the plunderers were acquit! Kindly explain the cause of this.

34. How was it that those chaste and virtuous wives of Śrī Kṛṣṇa went into troubles at the latter end of their lives? There has arisen a doubt in my mind on this point.

35. Why did the virtuous Vāsudeva leave his mortal coil owing to the death of his sons, and why did he die an unusual death?

36. O best of Munis! The Pāṇḍavas were devoted to Kṛṣṇa and they were religious; they had to suffer so many troubles!

37. Why was Draupadī, who was born of Lakṣmī from amidst the sacrificial place and from the altar, so very unfortunate and had to suffer so many miseries and pains?

38-39. Why did Duhśāsana drag Her by Her hair while She was in Her menstruation period, in the hall of audience, and why was it that Sindhu Rāj Jayadratha, the king of Sindhu, gave Her exceedingly mental troubles?

40. Why was it that Her five sons residing in Her house were killed by Aśvaththāmā? What was the cause that the son of Subhadrā had to die in the battlefield?

41. Why did the king Kaṁsa kill the six sons of Devakī; and why was it that Śrī Hari, who was capable of averting their Fate, did not at all prevent that?

42. What a wonder this is, that in the matters of Brāhmaṇa's curse toward the Yādavas, their being killed in the Prabhāsa, the total extermination the

Yadu race and the plundering of His wives, why did He allow Fate to do these great momentous things?

43. If He was the all-powerful God and He Himself Nārāyaṇa, that why did He incessantly act like a slave towards Ugrasena? Ugrasena was the king of Mathurā and father of Kaṁsa. He was deposed by his son; but Kṛṣṇa after having slain Kaṁsa restored him to the throne.

44-45. All these bring doubt in our minds regarding Nārāyaṇa Muni, that His deeds are always like those of ordinary persons; why did his pleasures and pains resemble those of ordinary human beings? Were he God, why his actions were not superhuman?

46. Therefore dost Thou describe in detail all the Divine *līlās* (playful sports) done by Hari of superhuman powers in this world.

47. O Best of Munis! When one's longevity expires, one dies; then I cannot understand what glory was manifested by Hari in killing the Daityas? For Fate killed them; not Hari.

48. Was not the doing of Hari like a thief when he stole away the Lady Rukminī and fled quickly to his own place?

49. What did it mean when he fled to Dvārakā city, and quit his own highly prosperous town Mathurā, simply out of the fear of Jarāsandha?

50. Did not anybody at that time recognize that he was Śrī Bhagavān Hari? O Respected One! Were he Bhagavān, why did He hide himself in Vraja? Please explain the cause to me.

51. O Muni! These and many other doubts always exist in my mind; you are the best of the Dvijas and blessed; I pray, dost thou remove these doubts.

52-53. O best of Munis! Another doubt exists and is not dispelled and that is secret. Was not the taking of the five husbands by Pāncālī for herself

shameful and despised by the society? The good manners and doings are always considered by the learned as the proofs of virtue. Why did those Pāṇḍavas, then, capable in every respect, do this thing like brutes?

54. And what did Bhīṣma do, living like a Deva in this world? May I ask, was his act of producing two sons by a widow and thus preserving his line of ancestors worthy of his name?

55. The religious sanction advocated by the Munis 'Procreate sons in any way whatsoever' is simply shameful. Fie to this religious sanction."

Here ends the 17th Chapter in the 4th Book of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the questions asked by Janamejaya.

Chapter XVIII—Devī Earth goes to Heaven

1. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hear in detail the complete life and the deeds in the incarnation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and also the various wonderful achievements by the Goddess of this universe.

2. Once on a time, the Earth was very much overburdened by the load of wicked kings and She was therefore very much afraid.

3. She then assumed the appearance of a cow and went to the Devaloka, crying and very much dejected. Indra, the lord of the Devas, asked her, 'O Vasundhare! What is the cause of your fear now? Who has troubled you? What afflictions are you merged in? Please tell me all these.'

4. On hearing Indra's words, the Earth exclaimed: 'O giver of respect! When You have asked me, I am explaining to you the cause of all my afflictions and sorrows; at present I am overburdened with too much load.

5-8. Now is reigning in the earth Jārāsandha, the king of Magadha, a very very vicious person. Thus the other Śiśupāla, the lord of the Chedis, the

uncontrollable Kāśirāj, Rukmī, the powerful Kaṁsa, the strong Naraka, the Sauvapati Śālva, the wicked Keśī, Dhenuka, and Batsaka—all these are now in royal positions. O Lord of the Devas! These kings are all devoid of the least trace of virtue, quarrelsome against each other, infatuated with vanity, and addicted to vicious deeds. These have become kings as if they were personified Yamas, Lords of Death, and are constantly troubling me. I am now unable to carry their loads; where shall I go now? This great thought is constantly ailing me.

9-11. O Vasava! What to tell! The Bhagavān in His Boar Incarnation is the cause of all these my afflictions; O Indra! These present troubles I am fallen into only through Him; for when the cruel Daitya Hirāṅyāksa; the son of Kaśyapa stole me away and drowned me in the great ocean, then it was Viṣṇu in his Boar incarnation that killed him and rescued me from the ocean and then kept me in this my stable position.

12. Had He not then lifted me up, I would have rested safe in the depths of Rasātala; O Lord of the Devas! Now I am quite unable to bear the load of these vicious persons.

13. O Surendra! The vicious twenty-eight Kaliyuga is coming quickly in front. Thinking of His influence, it seems to me that I will be very troubled then and will have to go down to Rasātala.

14. Therefore, O Lord of the Devas! I am bowing down before Your feet, kindly relieve me of my burden and save me from these endless troubles.'

15. Indra said: 'O Earth! I cannot do anything for you. You better go and take refuge of Brahmā. I am also going to him. He will remove all your troubles.'

16. Hearing Indra's words the Earth hurriedly went to the realm of Brahmā, and Indra and all the other Devas followed Her; and all reached the Brahmaloka.

17-18. O King! Grandfather Brahmā saw the Earth coming to him, and through the power of meditation found out the cause of Her coming and said: 'O Auspicious One! why are You crying? What troubles You have now? What wicked person has given You troubles?'

19. The Earth said: 'O Lord of the Earth! The vicious Kali is coming before; under its influence the subjects will be horribly vicious; therefore I am very much afraid of this Kaliyuga.

20. In the beginning of this Kaliyuga, the ancient enemies, the Asuras have now incarnated on this earth as kings. They will be extremely wicked, quarreling against each other, and will be clever in stealing other's things. There is no doubt about these.

21. O Grandfather! Now kill these vicious kings and relieve my burden. O Lord! I am very much troubled by the armies of these kings.'

22. Brahmā said: 'O Goddess! Like Indra, I too am unable to remove your load. Let us go to Viṣṇu, the holder of the disc.

23. That Janārdana will remove your burden. I thought of this well before and settled what to do.'

24-25. Vyāsa said: "Thus saying, the four-faced Brahmā, the author of the *Vedas*, rode on His Haṁsa carrier, taking in front the Goddess Earth; and the Devas went to Viṣṇu and began to praise Viṣṇu Janārdana, the Deva of the Devas, with the words of the *Vedas* with full devotion.

26. Brahmā said: 'Thou hast thousand heads, thousand faces, thousand feet. Thou art the Puruṣa of the *Vedas*, Thou art the Deva of the Devas, and Thou art Eternal.

27. O Omnipresent! Thou art the Past, Present, and Future! O Lord of Lakṣmī! Thou hast awarded immortality unto us.

28. Thou art the Creator of universe, the Preserver and the Destroyer; Thou art the One and the Only goal and thou art the God. Everybody knows that all these glories belong to Thee.'

29. Vyāsa said: "O king! When Brahmā praised thus, Viṣṇu whose sign was Garuḍa, was highly pleased and appeared before Brahmā and the other Devas.

30. Then Bhagavān asked them about their welfare and enquired in detail into the cause of their arrival there.

31. Brahmā them bowed down to Him and, remembering the cause of the sorrows of the Goddess Earth, said: 'O Lord! Thou art now to relieve the burden of the Earth.

32. O Thou, Ocean of mercy! When the end of the Dvāpara-yuga will come Thou art to incarnate in the world and kill the wicked kings, and thus relieve the burden of the Earth.'

33-34. Viṣṇu said: 'I am not independent in these matters; not only I— Brahmā, Maheśa, Indra, Agṇi, Yama, Visvakarmā, the Sun, Varuṇa and other Devas, nobody is independent. This whole universe, moving and unmoving is existing under the control of the Yogamāyā; and from Brahmā down to the clot of grass, all are strung into the thread of Her triple qualities.

35. O One of good vows! Whatever that Yogamāyā, the Supreme Goddess, Who is all will, Whose mouth is inward, Who does good at all times, what She wills, She does that at any time. You should all know that we are entirely under Her control.

36-41. You better think that were I independent, why would I have stayed in the great ocean, incarnating in the fish and tortoise forms? O Brahmā! What name or pleasure is there in enjoyment in the body of lower animals! What holy merit or any other reward may I expect from being born in the

wombs of lower animals? What is the reason that I assume the body of a boar? or of a man-lion? or of a dwarf? Why was I born as the son of Jamadagni? Especially why did I, being born of that high-souled Brāhmaṇa Jamadagni, and being the best of the Brāhmaṇas, do the most atrocious act like that of a heartless brute, and fill up the lakes with their blood. Alas! I killed the Kṣatriyas mercilessly; to say nothing of that, I killed the sons that were then in the wombs. Were I independent, what for I would have done these horrible and cruel deeds? O Lord of the Devas! See again: In my Rāma incarnation I roamed on foot, helpless and without any provision, in the fearful Daṇḍaka forest unfrequented by anybody, wearing clotted hair, bark, rags, like a man who feels no shame, and behaved like a hunter and killed many animals.

42-44. Being under the delusion of Māyā, I could not make out the real nature of the golden deer; consequently leaving Janakī in the thatched cottage, I went out pursuing the deer. Though repeatedly warned by me not to leave the place, Lakṣmana was moved by the qualities of Prakṛti, forsook her and went out to search for Me.

45. Then the hypocrite Rāvaṇa, the king of the Rākṣasas, in the garb of a beggar, stole away by force the daughter of Janaka, who had become very lean on account of sorrows.

46. I was very much distressed owing to the separation from my dear wife, and roamed about weeping sorely in the forest and formed friendship with Sugrīva, under the influence of the circumstances.

47. It was an act of gross injustice on my part to kill Bālī, the king of the monkeys. I freed him from his curse; afterwards, aided by the monkeys, I had to go to Laṅkā.

48. When my younger Lakṣmana and myself were both enchained under the chain of the serpents, Nāgapāśa, and were senseless, the monkeys all were astonished.

49. Then Garuḍa came and freed us two brothers from those Nāgapāśas! I considered then what adverse inauspicious circumstances Fate sometimes ordains on our lot.

50. I lost my kingdom, lived in the forest, my father died, Janakī was stolen and I had to suffer extreme troubles in very deadly battles; I could not know what worse fate still awaited for us?

51. O Suras! What more calamity can you expect to befall any person than that I was from the very first deprived of my kingdoms and wealth, and had to go to the forest with the princess Sītā dwelling in and taking shelter in a dense forest?

52. At the time of my going to the forest my father did not give a single penny; penniless and helpless I had to get out of Ayodhyā on foot.

53. I was compelled to leave my Kṣatriya-*dharma* and take up the avocation of a hunter and thus to spend fourteen years in forest.

54. After that, under the benign influence of Fate, I was able to kill that Asura Rāvaṇa and got the victory in the battle, and was able to bring back dear Sītā to Ayodhyā.

55. There I succeeded in becoming the ruler of the kingdom Kośala with its subjects, and got the full kingdom and enjoyed for a few years the pleasures of the world.

56-57. The stealing away of Sītā took place at the first outset; next I got my kingdom; then the subjects began to circulate the bad name regarding Janakī; and I being afraid of that, deported her into exile in the forest. At that time I had to suffer again extreme pain and agony due to the separation from my wife. Then the daughter of the Goddess Earth penetrated into the Earth and got down to the Pātāla.

58. O Devas! When I had to depend on Fate and to suffer so many troubles incessantly, where else can you dare to say that an independent man exists?

59. Afterwards under the influence of Time, I had to go to Heaven with my brothers. Let all this point to what it may, the intelligent learned people can say what an amount of mishaps takes place to one who is dependent!

60. O One born from the Lotus! You hear my word; I am in every way dependent; why only I? Rudra, you and all those Suras are fully dependent.'

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Fourth Skandha of the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the Devī Earth's going to the Heavens.

Chapter XIX—chanting the hymns to the Devī

1. Vyāsa said: "Bhagavān Viṣṇu spoke again unto Prajāpati: 'Brahmā! All these beings fascinated by Māyā, cannot know the real essence, the highest Truth.

2. We, too, are fascinated by that Māyā; and hence we also, being blinded by that, do not at all remember that highest eternal Puruṣa, calm and quiet, the World Teacher, the Highest Self, of the nature of Pure *saccidānanda:* Existence, Intelligence and Bliss.

3. O Brahmā! We are thinking "I am Viṣṇu, I am Brahmā, I am Rudra"—thus our I-ness *ahaṅkāra* has blinded our eyesight; and we are made unable to recognize That Eternal Highest Self.

4. As wooden dolls dance according to the will of the puppeteer, the magician, I also am similarly fascinated by the Māyā and am thus incessantly rolling about like a dependent man.

5-6. O Brahmā: In the beginning of the *kalpa*, Maheśvara, you and I saw the wonderful indescribable form and glory of that Highest Self at the time of Rāsamaṇḍāla in the Māni-dvīpa where there was the Mandāra Tree and the Devas assembled. Then I also saw that wonderful thing a second time in

the Sudhārnava ocean of nectar, and the most wonderful of it is this: that until we were able to See that Form, we did not hear anything of Her before!

7. Therefore, O Devas! Today do you all remember that Ādya-Śakti, the Prime Force, the Highest Self, that all-beneficent Force that yields all good and auspicious things; that very Śakti will fulfill now all your desires.'

8. Vyāsa said: "O king! No sooner the Bhagavān Hari spoke thus, Brahmā and the other Devas at once mentally began to meditate on that eternal Yoga-māyā, the Goddess of the Universe.

9. Being thus meditated upon, at once appeared before their eyesight the Devī, the Goddess of the Universe, whose colors were like the blood-red Javā flower, holding in two of Her hands noose and goad, while the third hand indicated favor and the fourth hand bade all to discard every sort of fear. At Her appearance Brahmā prayed:

10. 'As the web comes out of a spider and sparks come out of fire, so this whole Universe comes out of that Goddess. We all bow down before Her with our humble hearts, full of devotion.

11. We all salute to that Goddess of the Universe, Bhuvaneśvarī, under Whose *māyik* force this whole Universe, moving and unmoving, is created; Who is all-ntelligent and the ocean of mercy.

12. This world appears real to him who is unable to realize Her real essence; and the world drops off as unreal no sooner he realizes Her presence. We all meditate on that all-intelligent Goddess, and we all pray to Her that She may grant unto us more strength to meditate Her and Her alone.

13. We all want to know Mahā-Lakṣmī, we all meditate on the Omnipotent; May the Goddess grant unto us strength to meditate on Her so.

14. O Thou, the Remover of the world's afflictions! Thou being pleased unto us; O Thou, kind-hearted! Do this work for us and promote our good. O Thou, Lord of the Earth! Dost Thou relieve the burden of the earth by killing these Asuras and bring on our welfare.

15. O Thou, Lotus-Eyed! If Thou dost not show Thy mercy towards the gods, they will never be able to strike their enemies with their weapons in the battlefield. O Goddess! Thou didst verify the truth of this before, when Thou didst assume the appearance of a Yakṣa and utter the following sentences "O Fire! You burn this blade of grass," etc. (in the *Kena-Talavakāra Upaniṣad*)

16. O Mother! Kaṁsa, Bhauma, Kālayavana, Keśī, Jarāsandha, the son of Brihadratha, Vaka, Pūtanā, Khara, Śālva and other vicious kings respectively are dwelling on the earth. Dost Thou better kill them and relieve the burden of the Earth.

17. O Lotus-Eyed! Thou hadst killed those Asuras without any effort that were not slain by Viṣṇu or Maheśvara and they ended their lives while beholding Thy pleasing countenance.

18. O Goddess holding the Moon on Her forehead! These Hari, Hara, Brahmā and the other gods are unable to move a step without the help of Your Śakti; nothing to speak any further, the thousand-headed King of Serpents is unable to hold this earth even for a moment, were he not provided with the *śakti* of upholding this world.'

19. Indra said: 'O Bhagavatī! Would Brahmā be ever able to create this world without the aid of Sarasvatī? Would Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas, be ever able to preserve it without the aid of Lakṣmī or would Maheśvara ever be able to destroy this world without the help of His Umā? No, never! These Devas, the Trimūrti, are able to take their respective parts in the keeping up of the world simply because they are united with the forces incarnate in Sarasvatī, etc., who are again parts of Thee.'

20. Viṣṇu said: 'O Vimale! Were we deprived of Thy Force, the Creator would never have been able to create the world, I would never have been able to preserve it and Maheśvara would never have been able to destroy. Therefore O Devī! Thou alone art reigning as the Supreme Goddess amidst all the glories in the creation, preservation, and destruction of this Universe.'

21-22. Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus praised by the Gods, the Goddess then addressed them: 'O Devas! Let all anxieties leave you all; I will do what the Devas have desired, even if it be very difficult to do in this world; now explain what is troubling the Goddess Earth.'

23. The Devas replied: 'The wicked kings are troubling very much this Earth. She cannot any longer bear their burden; therefore She came crying unto us.

24. O Bhuvaneśvarī! Now it is Your duty to remove this load of earth. O Auspicious One! Know this, the desire of the gods.

25-28. O Mother! In days of yore, You have killed the most powerful Dānava named Mahiṣa, attended by *lakhs* and *lakhs* of Dānavas and Daityas; What to speak! You have slain Śumbha, Niśumbha, Raktavīja, the very powerful Caṇḍa Muṇḍa, Dhumralochana, Durmukha, Duhsana, the strong Karāla and many other cruel Dānavas. Now, similarly kill the wicked kings, the enemies of the Gods and save the Earth from their heavy loads.'

29. Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed by the Devas, the Most Auspicious One, the Devī, whose color was black and who looked askance, said smiling in a tone, grave and deep, like that of the rumbling of a raincloud:

30. 'O Suras! I have already thought over how the burden of those wicked kings, the parts incarnate of Asuras, can be removed.

31. I will, by My own power, rob them of their powers, of that highly prosperous and affluent Jārasandha, the king of Magadha, and others, the parts incarnate of the wicked Asuras, that are now shining on the Earth.

32. O Devas! You would all better go down and incarnate yourselves as part incarnations, impregnated with My power, and help thus in the removal of the load of this earth.

33. The Deva Prajāpati Maharṣi Kaśyapa would first of all go with his his wife and incarnate as Ānakadundubhi Vasudeva, in the race of Yadu.

34. The imperishable Bhagavān Viṣṇu will also incarnate as part, owing to the curse of Bhṛgu, as the son of Vasudeva.

35. O Devas! I will be born, then, in the womb of Yaśodā, in Gokula and will accomplish all the ends of the Gods.

36. I will send Viṣṇu from the prison to Gokula; also I will transfer Anāntā Deva from the womb of Devakī to the womb of Rohinī.

37. They two will grow, day by day, by My force, and at the end of the Dvāpara Yuga, will no doubt kill the wicked kings.

38-39. Arjuna too, the part incarnate of Indra, will destroy the armies of those kings. Yudhiṣṭhira, the part incarnate of Dharma, Bhīmsena, that of Vāyu, Nakula and Sahadeva the incarnate of the two Aśvins, and Bhīṣma, the incarnate of Vayu as the son of the Gangā, will take their respective births and exhaust their armies.

40. O Devas! Now be calm and quiet and go. Let the Earth be also calm and quiet; be confident that I will certainly remove the load of this earth.

41. I will make the above-mentioned Gods as my instruments merely, and I will destroy, by My own force, the Kṣatriyas in the battlefield of Kurukṣetra.

42. Malice, jealousy, foul intention, desire, attachment, vanity, covetousness, desire for victory, lust, and fascination are the vices that will destroy the Yādavas.

43. The race of Yadu will end owing to the curse of a Brāhmaṇa. Bhagavān also will leave His mortal coil due to a curse.

44. Now go and incarnate in your respective parts, with your wives, in Gokula and Mathurā, and be helpers in the work of the Lord.'

45-46. Vyāsa said: "Saying thus, the Devī the Goddess of the Universe, the Māyā incarnate of the Highest Self, disappeared. The Devas and the Earth went to their respective places. O king Janamejaya! the Goddess Earth was pleased with the Devī's words, and being quiet, remained surrounded with various medicinal plants and creepers.

47. Then the subjects felt peace and pleasure, the Brāhmaṇas also grew stronger in happiness and prosperity, and the Munis became glad and began to perform their religious acts with fresh zeal and alacrity."

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses, the MahāPurāṇam on chanting the hymns to the Devī by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—Devakī's marriage

1-2. Vyāsa said: "O Bharata! I now narrate to you about the relief of the burden of the Earth, the destruction by the Yoga-māyā of the armies at Kurukṣetra and Prabhāsa, the two sacred places, and about the birth, due to the curse of Bhṛgu, of Bhagavān Hari, of unparalleled prowess, under the influence of Mahā-māyā, in the race of Yadu. Now hear.

3. Viṣṇu's taking birth in the world was effected under the circumstances caused by Yoga-māyā, to relieve the burden of the Earth; this is my opinion.

4. O king! When the Goddess Mahā-māyā, the incarnation of the three qualities can make Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the other Devas dance incessantly as their internal controller, then what wonder that She would appear charming to the other *jīvas* and make them dance incessantly, like wooden dolls.

5. All the troubles incurred in remaining in the womb, amidst the urine, excreta and tissues, She had brought to bear finally on Viṣṇu by Her ever-famous *līlā* (Divine Sport).

6. In days of yore, in Rāma incarnation, that Supreme Goddess made the Gods become monkeys, and you know very well already what amount of trouble Bhagavān Viṣṇu had to undergo by the hard iron chain of bondage, 'This is mine, this is I,' etc., imposed by Māyā.

7. The *yogīs* who want final liberation, who have abandoned all their attachments and who want devotion, worship the Supreme Goddess of the Universe, the Incarnate of Auspiciousness.

8. O king! Who will not serve Her? A trace of devotion towards Whom effects at once the salvation of the *jīvas*.

9. If any human being utters simply the name "Bhuvaneśvarī" (the Goddess of Universe) She gives him the three worlds; and if anyone cries and utters for help "Save me," then the Goddess of the Universe, being unable to find anything that She can repay him as a fit recompense for his utterance, becomes Herself indebted to that man.

10. O King! Know *vidyā* (knowledge) and *avidyā* (spiritual ignorance, lower knowledge) are Her two forms; *vidyā* gives liberation; *avidyā* causes bondage.

11. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, all these and their *avatāras* are Her instruments and are under Her subjection, as if they are all fastened by a cord.

12-14. The Bhagavān Hari sometimes resides in Vaikuṇṭha, sometimes resides in the sea of milk and enjoys pleasures, sometimes fights the powerful Dānavas, sometimes performs extensive sacrificial ceremonies, sometimes performs severe asceticism and sometimes takes to deep sleep under the guidance of Yoga-māyā. Thus He never becomes free and independent.

15-16. O King! And like Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Rudra, the other Gods Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Kuvera, Agṇi, the Sun, Moon and other celestial gods, Sanaka and other Munis, Vasiṣṭha and other Ṛṣis, all are incessantly controlled by the Supreme Goddess, as if they are the dolls in the hands of a playing magician.

17. All the Devas are controlled by the noose of Time, just as oxen are brought under control by men by strings passed within their noses.

18. O King! Pleasure, pain, sleep, lassitude, idleness, and other passions and feelings are always found inherent in every embodied being.

19-23. The Devas are written down by authors in their books as not subject to death or decay; this statement is merely nominal and not real; for whoever is always subject to birth, growth, decay and death, how can we call him immortal or beyond old age and death? Why do the Devas get into sorrows, and troubles? How can they be called gods? How can one enjoy when one is involved in a trouble? In this world, it is seen that mosquitoes and other insects born from water die after a very short time; so, like these, the Devas at the expiry of their ordained life-period, die too. Then why not the Devas be treated like those insects? Why not shall we term them "Mortal"?

24-25. Some human beings live one year; some others live up to one hundred years, the Devas live longer than men; the life of the Prājāpatī Brahmā exceeds those of the Devas; Rudra lives longer than Brahmā; and Viṣṇu lives longer than Rudra. All these are thus subject by turns to birth, growth, and decay.

26. Those who are born, they die; those that die are again born. Thus O King! In this world all the *jīvas*, no doubt, move round and round like a wheel.

27. The *jīvas* are deluded by the network of *moha* (charms) and thus deluded. They can never gain final release. So long as Māyā exists in them, their delusion is not destroyed.

28. O King! At the time of creation Brahmā and all other things came into existence, in due order, and these will duly dissolve at the time of the Great Dissolution (*pralaya*).

29. Whatever is the cause of destruction to anybody here, that destroys the body in question. According to the will-power of the Supreme Goddess, whatever is created by Brahmā, no none can undo that. Know this as perfectly certain.

30. Know this the predestined law that the birth, death, old age, diseases, pain or pleasure overtake all the *jīvas* according to the prescribed order of Nature; never these laws fail to operate in their actions.

31. See! The Devas that we see with our physical eyes, the Sun and Moon yield pleasure to all; still they suffer always troubles at the hands of their enemies such as Rāhu and Ketu—there always take place regularly solar and lunar eclipses, when they are in the ascending and descending modes. This suffering is never removed.

32. The son of the Sun (Saturn) is always injurious to people; hence it is termed *maṇḍā* (bad); the Moon was attacked with consumption and bears stain on his body (spots in the Moon disc). What to speak of ordinary men? The great men even are subject to the prescribed laws of Fate and Nature.

33. The Creator of the world, the four-faced Brahmā is the author of the *Vedas* and awarder of intelligence. He, too, on seeing Sarasvatī, his own daughter, was afflicted with passion.

34. When Sati, the wife of Śiva, left off Her mortal coil, Mahādeva, though He could remove the sorrows of all, was very much moved with passion and greatly afflicted.

35. Then, being burnt very much as it were by the fire of passion, he threw himself down into the water of the river Kālindī; and the water of that river became black-colored, as if burnt by the burning fire of the sorrows of Śiva.

36-37. O King! When Mahādeva, being infatuated with *kāma*, went into the forest of Bhṛgu and becoming naked, began to copulate, the ascetic Bhṛgu seeing him in that state, exclaimed "O You are very shameless" and cursed Him thus: "Let your penis drop off just now." Mahādeva, then to satisfy his thirst for passion, began to drink the water of the lake Amrita Vapī, dug by the Dānavas.

38-39. Indra, too, the Lord of the Devas, turned into a bull and carried Viṣṇu on his back on the face of the earth. What to speak where the omniscience and omnipotence disappeared of Bhagavān Viṣṇu, Who is the First of all created beings and possessed of reason, and discrimination? Oh! What a great wonder, that He could not know about the golden deer?

40-41. Judge, O King! for yourself, the great power of Māyā, that even Rāmacandra was deluded by passion, and very much grieved for the separation from his dear wife Sītā, and wept much for Her. Greatly deluded, he began to cry aloud and ask the trees "Where has gone My Sītā, the daughter of Janaka? Is she devoured by the rapacious animals? or whether is she stolen by some mischievous person?

42-44. O Brother Lakṣmana! I am being consumed by the fire of separation from my beloved; I will commit suicide now; and you too will die due to the separation from me; our mother, too, would die when they will hear of our deaths; Satrughna, too, will be very much afflicted at our death and will not hold his life. The mother Sumitrā, too, will destroy her life, being afflicted with her son's demise; and then Bharata's and his mother's desires will certainly be fulfilled.

45. O Sītā! I am very much moved by your separation; where have you gone, leaving me here! O deer-eyed, O one of thin waist! come; give life unto me!

46. What shall I do? Where shall I go? My life is entirely dependent on you, O daughter of Janaka! I am your darling! Now I am very much depressed owing to your separation. Please come and speak to me words of hope and courage."

47. Though Rāma, of unequalled prowess, roamed about weeping from forest to forest, yet he could not find out Sītā.

48-49. He who is the refuge of all the worlds, the lotus-eyed Rāma, got entangled into the delusion of Māyā and had to take refuge Himself under the monkeys, and with their help, constructed the bridge across the ocean, crossed the ocean and was thus able to kill the valiant warriors Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa.

50. Then Rāma got back His Sītā but suspecting, since she had been stolen by the vicious Rāvaṇa, made her take an oath, though it is to be remembered that Rāma was all-knowing.

51. O King! The power of Yoga-māyā is very great; what shall I speak of Her great power? This whole cosmos is always urged into activity by Her and thus goes rolling on and on incessantly.

52. Thus, in various incarnations, Bhagavān Viṣṇu was always under the influence of previous curse, and also under the control of Destiny and had to do various functions incessantly.

53. O King! Now I will speak to you about the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the world for serving the purposes of gods, and will narrate His *līlā*.

54. In days of yore, on the delightful banks of the river Kālindī, there was a place called Madhuvan, where lived a powerful Daitya named Lavana, the son of Madhu.

55-56. That wicked demon was exceedingly arrogant, on getting a boon, and he used to give an enormous amount of trouble to the Dvijas. Satrughna the younger of Lakṣman, killed that uncontrollable Daitya and built a very beautiful city there and named it Mathurā.

57. The intelligent Satrughna, the destroyer of enemies, installed his two lotus-eyed sons in that kingdom and, when his end came, went to Heaven.

58. Afterwards on the decline of the Solar race, the Yādavas, born of the race of Yayāti, occupied that Mathurā city, giving salvation to all.

59. O King! There reigned in Mathurā city one Yādava king, the valiant warrior, named Śūrasena; and he enjoyed all the pleasures of Mathurā.

60. Under the curse of Varuṇa, Vasudeva took his birth as the son of the renowned Śūrasena, as the part incarnate of Kaśyapa.

61. He took up the profession of a Vaiśya and engaged himself in agriculture. And on the death of his father, the prosperous and wealthy Ugrasena became the King of Mathurā. The powerful Kaṁsa was the son of Ugrasena.

62. On the other hand, the King Devaka had a daughter born to him named Devakī, the part incarnate of Aditi. She under the curse of Varuṇa, followed Kaśyapa.

63. The high-souled King Devaka performed the marriage ceremony of his daughter Devakī with Vasudeva.

64. When this marriage ceremony was over, a voice was heard from Heaven, saying: 'O fortunate Kaṁsa! The eighth son of this Devakī will take away your life.'

65. The powerful Kaṁsa, hearing that voice from Heaven, was surprised and took it to be true and became very anxious.

66-67. Kaṁsa began to argue in his mind. Once he thought 'I would today destroy her; then my death won't take place; for I can't see any other way of escape from this difficulty,' again he thought, 'She is my sister, daughter of my paternal uncle and therefore fit to be worshipped; how can I kill her?'

68. Lastly, he came to the final conclusion, thus: 'She is the cause of my death, though she is my sister, fit to be worshipped; to kill her will not lead me to sin; for it is enjoined by the wise: Do even a sin to avert one's own death.

69. The sins can be remedied always by penances. Therefore to save one's life, by committing even a sinful act, ought to be done by the wise.'

70-71. The vicious Kaṁsa thus arguing, holding the scabbard in his hand, drew from it the sword and dragged and caught hold of the newly married handsome woman by her hair to kill her before the presence of the public.

72. A cry of universal consternation and distress arose on all sides, seeing Kaṁsa thus ready to kill Devakī; then the warriors, under Vasudeva, at once raised their bows and arrows, ready to fight.

73. These wonderfully valorous warriors loudly exclaimed to Kaṁsa, 'Leave Devakī at once! Leave Devakī at once!' and then they were finally able out of their mercy to release the Devamātā Devakī from the hold of the vicious Kaṁsa.

74. Deadly battles ensued then between the powerful Kaṁsa, and those valorous warriors on Vasudeva's side.

75-76. Seeing the exceedingly terrible battle, the old Yādavas asked Kaṁsa to desist from such a battle and advised him thus: 'This Devakī is your sister; you ought to pay her respects. Did you not consider even for a moment that she is as yet a girl. O Hero! You ought not to kill her at the time of this joyous marriage ceremony.

77. O Valiant Warrior! The murder of a woman is intolerable! The destroyer of fame, and the most heinous crime! You should also consider that learned persons ought not to commit such dastardly acts as the murdering of females, depending simply on a voice from heaven, a very ordinary thing!

78. It may be that some of your Vasudeva's enemy has uttered that harmful word, hiding himself from your sight. No reason can be shown contrary to this.

79. We are of opinion that to ruin your name and to destroy the house of Vasudeva, some magician, expert in black magic and your enemy, has framed this voice from Heaven.

80. O king! You are a hero; why do you fear the words of a devil? We firmly believe, there is no doubt, that this is done by your malicious enemy to ruin your name.

81. O king! What is destined to take place, will take place; no one can stand against it otherwise. Therefore, at this marriage festivity, you ought never to kill this your respected sister.'

82-83. "O King Janamejaya! Though made to understand thus by the old wise Yādavas, the king Kaṁsa did not desist from his purpose; Śrī Vasudeva, versed in morals, told him 'Kaṁsa! These three worlds are established on Truth. I say on Truth that I will hand over to you all my sons, born of the womb of Devakī, no sooner than they are born.

84. And if I do not deliver to you all those sons, no sooner they are born then all my forefathers will fall down into the hell called Kumbhīpāka.'

85-86. The descendants of Puru that were present there, hearing his truthful words, praised him repeatedly and told Kaṁsa 'Vasudeva is a high-minded personage; he is surely not to tell a lie. Therefore, O Thou, blessed one! Now leave Devakī and be free from committing the murder of woman.'

87. O king! Thus made to understand by the aged high-minded Yādavas, the king Kaṁsa accepted the truthful words of Vasudeva and abandoned his anger.

88. Then the *dundubis* and other sounding instruments were sounded; and their sounds filled the place; and all repeatedly uttered 'Jai, jai.'

89. Then the famous Vasudeva, the son of Śūrasena, thus pleased the king Kaṁsa and freed Devakī; and, surrounded by his relatives, went quickly without any fear to his own house, accompanied by Devakī."

Here ends the 20th chapter in the 4th Adhyāya of śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, on Devakī's marriage.

Chapter XXI—killing of the sons of Devakī

1. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus, in due course, Devakī, the goddess incarnate, being united according to rules with Vasudeva, became pregnant.

2-4. When full ten months were over, a good-looking and beautiful male child was first born to Devakī. Then the good-natured Vasudeva remembered his promise, and also what is ordained by Heaven; and he spoke to Devakī, the part incarnate of Aditi 'O fair-looking! You know that I saved your life at your marriage by swearing on oath to deliver all your fresh-born children to Kaṁsa. Now has come the time to hand over your child to Kaṁsa.

5. O good-haired woman! Now I will hand your this son to Kaṁsa. Know Kaṁsa is very cruel and wicked. I cannot say what step he will take, urged on by Fate, to kill your child. O Sweet One! We have no hands in the matter. The effects of Karma are exceedingly puzzling. Ordinary persons cannot know them.

6. All persons are subject to Time, the Destroyer, and enjoy the merits or demerits of their past deeds. The effects of past Karma are fashioned by the Creator; knowing this, allow me to take away your child.'

7. Devakī said: 'O Lord! Certainly men have to suffer fully the effects of their past *karma*. But can that not be upset by residing in holy places, practising penances and asceticism, or by making generous gifts?

8-9. The high-minded Maharṣis have fixed rules and penances for destroying the sins of past deeds; the twelve-year vow to observe penances can purify one from sins, e.g., Brāhmaṇacide, stealing gold, drinking or stealing the wife of one's preceptor, and many others.

10-11. O Sinless one! Will not anyone be freed from their sinful effects if they observe practices and penances as are ordained by Manu or other Munis? If you don't accept penances to be sufficiently purificatory, do you mean to say then, that what the Maharṣis, seers, Yājñavalkya and other promulgators of religious doctrines have uttered, they did so as an act of dire falsehood and villainy?

12. O My husband! It is said, "What is in the womb of Fate will surely come to pass"; if this be taken as granted, then the whole *Āyur-veda* (medicinal books) and *mantra-vādas*, the science and recitation of *mantras*, turn out utterly fruitless and false!

13-16. If all the actions are under the control of Fate, then no effect can come out of any effort; so all efforts are reduced to no effect. If what is ordained by Heaven is to come to pass, then what is the use of taking recourse to any action and *agṇistoma* sacrifices, etc., that are declared to lead to Heavens. Judge! If Heaven or Fate you consider all-in-all, then the whole *Vedas*, the revelations from God's mouth turn out false; if the *Vedas* be false, then there is no reason why the whole *dharma* will not be destroyed.

17. Now when it is seen that effects do come out whenever any exertion is made, then you ought to think out carefully and find out some means to avert danger. Therefore do you judge and find out a good way of preserving the life of this new-born baby. The learned people say that to tell a lie is not a sin if you can thereby save a life, and have an honest motive for the welfare of all.'

18. Vasudeva said: 'O blessed one! I now tell you what is truth and the matters connected with truth.

19-20. Effort, application and manifestation of energy are certainly the duties of man; but their effects are all under the Great Destiny or Fate. The Paṇḍitas knowing the ancient lore say that there are three kinds of *karma* mentioned in the *Purāṇas* and *āgamas:* first, the *sañcita-karma* (done in past births); the *prārabdha-karma*, ripened *karma*; and the *vartamāna-karma* (*karma* in hand).

21. The *karma*, both auspicious and inauspicious, done in many previous lives and preserved in seed forms, remains always inherent in a human soul. Urged on by this *karma*, the *jīvas* quitting their previous bodies enjoy Heaven or Hell as effects of their own acts.

22-23. According to their good or bad works, the *jīvas* acquire a higher happy body and enjoy various pleasures in the Heavens, or they take up very painful vicious bodies and suffer various pains in hell.

24-25. At the expiry of the above period in Heaven or Hell, when there comes the time of his assuming another body, the *jīva* becomes conscious of the subtle body (*liṅga-deha*) and takes his birth again. When the *liṅga-deha* comes into existence, the part of the *karma* done in various previous births that are ripe and ready to yield their fruits, gets attached to the *jīva* by God (or Destiny).

26. Therefore the collective effect of *karma* done in previous births always exists in a *jīva's* body. O Fair-eyed One! The effects of *prārabdha-karma*,

ripened and ready to yield their fruits, must have to be experienced by a *jīva*, whether happy or unhappy.

27. O beautiful young woman! Penances performed according to rules, destroy the effect of *karmas* that are in hand are weak—not yet accumulated strongly, so as to remain in seed form.

28. The *prārabdha-parma*, those acts out of all the previous acts done in previous births that are fully mature and ready to yield their fruits, cannot be averted; their effects must to be experienced and then they can die away; they cannot be expiated by penances or any other remedial measures. Therefore you must hand over unconditionally your newborn babe unto the hands of Kaṁsa.

29-30. O Goddess! I have never done any blameable action, nor have I told any lie. Therefore do you fulfill your truth and hand over your baby. O Devakī! *Dharma* is the only thing permanent and real in this fleeting world. Even the births and deaths of high-souled persons are subject to the great Destiny. Therefore the *jīvas* ought not to be sorry when there is no help for it.

31. O dear one! What shall I say to you? Know this much, that his life is spent in vain who is lost to Truth. O beautiful one! Whose this life is destroyed, what can he expect in the life to come?

32. Therefore, O Goddess! Give me your baby and I will hand it over to Kaṁsa. If we can observe this truth, we will meet with ample rewards afterwards; there is no doubt about it.

33. Where there are pains and pleasures for the *jīvas*, there it is highly incumbent on us to do good and meritorious deeds. If we can act according to Truth, we will certainly get good fruits.’

34. Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed by Vasudeva, the husband of Devakī, who was very much grieved and intelligent, gave over the newly born baby, her whole body trembling, to the hands of Vasudeva.

35. The virtuous Vasudeva took that baby and went out to Kaṁsa's palace. On the way, the people, seeing him thus, were very much astonished and began to praise him.

36-37. The people said: 'O people! See how Vasudeva is sensible to keep his word! He is taking his son to hand over to Kaṁsa. This truthful and high-souled man, free from malice, is going to give up his son to the hands of Kaṁsa who is death personified. See his wonderful patience; this man's life is really high, noble and true.'

38. Vyāsa said: "O King! Vasudeva, thus praised, reached at last Kaṁsa's palace and handed over his newly-born son to Kaṁsa.

39-41. King Kaṁsa, too, was very much astonished to see this wonderful patience of Vasudeva. Then he held aloft the child and laughed and said: 'O son of Śūrasena, you have been blessed today by giving me your son just now. But the voice from Heaven said that your eighth son will be the cause of my death; this your first son is not my cause of death. Therefore I will not kill this baby; you can take your baby back to your home.

O High-minded one! Let me have your eighth son brought here when he will be born; I hope you will positively do it.'

42. The cruel and wicked Kaṁsa returned the child and said: 'Let this child go back safely to his home.'

43-44. When the king Kaṁsa said thus, Vasudeva, the son of Śūrasena gladly took his child back and came home. Then the King Kaṁsa told his ministers that the Heavenly voice told that the eighth son would he the cause of his death; and so there was no necessity to kill that child. There was no need to incur sin by killing the first child.

45. The ministers, hearing the king Kaṁsa's those words, began to praise him very much and exclaimed repeatedly 'Well done, well done.' They went away to their respective homes when ordered to do so by Kaṁsa.

46-49. Now Nārada, the best of the Munis, arrived to Kaṁsa. The king Kaṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, stood up at once and offered him water to wash his mouth and with green grass and rice, worshipped him devotedly and enquired of his welfare. He then asked the Muni about the cause of his untimely arrival there. The Maharṣi Nārada then smilingly and with sweet words repeatedly uttered 'Kaṁsa, Kaṁsa' and then said, 'O blessed one! I went perchance to Sumeru Mountain. There Brahmā and other gods formed an assembly and were thus thinking out plans that Viṣṇu, the Supreme God, would take His birth in the womb of Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva to kill Kaṁsa.

50. Now I ask you, you are very expert as a politician; then why have you not killed the son of Vasudeva?' Kaṁsa said: 'I will kill the eighth son according to the Heavenly Voice.'

51. Nārada said: 'O King! Now I see that you do not understand anything of politics, leading to auspicious or inauspicious results; especially when you are quite ignorant of the Māyā of the Devas, then what shall I say to you?

52-53. The truth is this: The warriors, looking after their own welfare, never overlook the weakest of their foes. What have you understood when the Heavenly Voice uttered "the eighth son"? It means the children counted from the first and then finished upto eighth; it may mean first, second, third or up to eighth. Never forego your enemies; then why have you desisted in killing your enemy when you got that enemy in your possession? Nothing is shown of you in this act save dire foolishness and ignorance.'

54. Thus saying, the Maharṣi Nārada vanished quickly. Kaṁsa of little understanding, brought back the son of Vasudeva and killed him by dashing him against a stone, and was relieved."

Here ends the 21st Chapter of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses composed by Vedavyāsa, on the killing of the sons of Devakī.

Chapter XXII—part incarnations of the Devas

1. Janamejaya asked: "O grandfather! What bad act did that child commit, that no sooner he was born than he was killed by Kaṁsa?

2. Especially, Maharṣi Nārada is the the best amongst the Munis and foremost amongst the *brahma-vids* (knowers of Brahman), always doing virtuous acts, and learned; why did he become the agent in this very sinful act?

3. Paṇḍitas declare that the doers and stimulators of any evil deed both are equally responsible; then how is it that Nārada, being the best of the Munis, instigated the wicked Kaṁsa to do this evil act?

4. I am very much in doubt on this point. Kindly describe, in detail, the act that the child did as the result of which be had to meet with this fate of being killed."

5. Vyāsa said: "Devarṣi Nārada is always fond of seeing quarrels brought about amongst parties; he always likes thus to see the fun. Here specially to serve the gods' purpose, he went to Kaṁsa and incited him to such an act.

6. Really he never intends to speak a lie; he is always truth speaking; pure-hearted, and always ready to serve the gods.

7. Thus the six sons were born to Devakī; and Kaṁsa, too, killed those six sons consecutively as they were born. These six sons named Sadgarbha were killed just after their births, owing to their having been previously cursed.

8. O King! Hear why they were cursed before. In the reign of Svāyambhuva Manu, were born to Urnā, the wife of Maharṣi Marīchi, six powerful sons, all of a virtuous disposition.

9-11. Once, on an occasion, the Prajāpati Brahmā, on seeing his daughter, became passionate, and was ready to hold sexual intercourse with her. At this, those six sons laughed at him. Brahmā cursed them saying 'You all go quickly and take your birth in the wombs of the asuras.' Therefore those six sons became the sons of Kālanemi in their first birth. At their second birth, they became the sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu. This second time they had the fear of curse in their minds and therefore were born endowed with knowledge.

12. In this birth they became peaceful and, collecting all their energies, they began to practice austerities. Brahmā was pleased at this and asked the Sadgarbha to take boons.

13. Brahmā said: 'O my sons! I was very angry to you before and cursed you; now I am very much pleased with you; ask boons from me that you all desire.'

14-15. Vyāsa said: "Hearing Brahmā's words, they were very glad and becoming very anxious to secure their objects of desire, said: 'O our grandsire! Today thou art pleased unto us; now favor us with our desired boons. That we may be invulnerable to all the Devas, human beings, the big serpents the Gandharvas, and the Lord of Siddhas (semi-divine beings supposed to be of great purity and holiness and said to be particularly characterised by eight supernatural faculties called Siddhis).'

16. Vyāsa said: "Brahmā told them 'What you have asked, you would certainly get; O blessed ones! better go now; my words will be found to be literally true. No doubt about this.'

17-19. Granting them boons, Brahmā went away; they then became very glad. O best of Kurus! Hiraṇyakaśipu began to think 'My sons now have pleased the Grandsire Brahmā and are now regardless of me' and got very

angry and said: 'You have are become very proud on account of receiving boons; and since you have ceased your good feelings towards me I also henceforth cut off my connection with you. Now better go to Pātāla; you will be known in this world as Sadgarbha.

20-21. At present you would be always involved in deep sleep and remain in Pātāla for many years; and when you will be born one after another in the womb of Devakī, then your father Kālanemi of previous birth will be born as Kaṁsa; and he would be cruel-hearted and surely kill you all, no sooner you be born.'

22. Vyāsa said: "Thus because they were cursed, they took their births repeatedly and Kaṁsa too, being urged on by the same curse, killed those sons of Devakī, the Sadgarbha, no sooner they were born.

23-24. Then the seventh child of Devakī, Ananta made his appearance. The foetus in the womb was attracted by Yoga-māyā and placed in the womb of Rohinī. But there was the rumour that there was miscarriage in the womb of Devakī in the fifth month; and this became known to the public.

25. Kaṁsa came to know that there had been miscarriage. That wicked soul became exceedingly glad to hear this news.

26. And at about this time Bhagavān, the Protector of the devotees, appeared as the eighth child of Devakī to serve the purpose of the gods and to relieve the burden of the Earth."

27-28. The King said: "O best of Munis! You have described the part incarnations of Kaśyapa as Vasudeva and of Bhagavān Hari to relieve the burden of the Goddess Earth as prayed by Her; and of Ananta Deva; but you have not described the part incarnations of the other Devas. How the other Devas incarnated as their parts on this earth? Kindly describe them now."

29. Vyāsa said: "The part incarnations of Suras and Asuras on this earth, and their names I am now saying to you in brief; hear.

30-32. Vasudeva was the part incarnation of Kaśyapa, Devakī was of Aditi, Baladeva, of Ananta; Vāsudeva Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of Śrīmān Nārāyaṇa the son of Dharma existing even at that time in his physical body; Arjuna, of Nara, the younger brother of Nārāyaṇa.

33. Yudhiṣṭhira was part incarnate of Dharma, Bhimasena, of Vāyu, the powerful twins of Mādri, Nakul and Sahadeva, of Aśvinī-kumāras.

34. The valiant hero Karṇa, born of Kuntī, was part incarnate of the Sun, and the high-minded Vidura, the knower of the Supreme Essence, was incarnate of Yama, the king Dharmarāj. Droṇa, the *ācārya* of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, was the part incarnate of Bṛhaspati; and his son Aśvatthāmā was part incarnate of Rudra Deva.

35. Śantanu was the part incarnate of the Ocean; his wife, of the river Ganges in human form. It is stated in the *Purāṇas* that the king Devaka was part incarnate of the Lord of Gandharvas.

36-41. The Grandfather of the Kauravas, the foremost of the heroes, Bhīṣmadeva was the incarnate of Vasu; Virāta, the Lord of Matsya was the part incarnate of Maruts; Dhṛtarāṣṭra, of the Daitya Haṁśa, the son of Aristanemi; Kṛpa and Kṛta Varmā, of the Maruts; Duryodhana, of Kali and Śakuni, of Dvāpara; Suvarchākhya Somapraru, of the son of the Moon; Dhṛṣṭadyumna was part incarnate of Fire and Śikhandī of Rākṣasa; Pradyumna was part incarnate of Sanatkumāra; the king Drupada was part incarnate of Varuṇa; Draupadī, of Lakṣmī; Draupadī's five sons, of the Viṣva-devas; Kuntī was incarnate of Siddhi; Mādri, of Dhṛti; Gāndhārī, of Mati; the wives of Śrī Kṛṣṇa were the heavenly public women; thus all the Devas came as their part incarnations, urged on by Indra.

42-43. Amongst the Asuras, Śiśupāla was the incarnate of Hiraṇyakaśipu; Jarāsandha, of Biprachitti, Śalya, of Prahlāda; Kaṁsa, of Kālanemi and

Keśī, of Hayaśirā. The Asura named Arista of the form of a cow that was killed by Kṛṣṇa was the son of Bali.

44. Dhṛṣṭaketu was part incarnate of Anuhrādha; Bhagadatta, of Vāskala; Pralamba, of Lamba; Dhenuka, of Khara.

45. Cānūra and Muṣṭika, the two athletes, were part incarnates of Vārāha and Kiśora, the two dreadful Daityas.

46-47. Kubalaya, the elephant of Kaṁsa, was part incarnate of Arista, the sun of Diti. Vakī was the daughter of Bali, Vaka was her younger. The powerful son of Droṇa, Aśvatthāmā, though known as the part incarnate of Rudra, was really born of the four parts of Yama, Rudra, Cupidity and Anger.

48-49. The Daityas and Rākṣasas that were born to relieve the heavy burden of the Earth were all incarnates of Asuras. O king! I have thus narrated to you in order the incarnations of the Suras and Asuras, as they are stated duly in the *Purāṇas*.

50-51. When Brahmā and the other Devas went to Viṣṇu and prayed to Him, then Hari gave to Brahmā one hair of a black color and one hair of a white color. The Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was born of that black hair and Saṅkarṣaṇa Bāladeva was born of the white hair. They were both the incarnations of Viṣṇu. Note here the black is the younger and the stronger; and they also represent the polarities. The *jīvas* are points of those hairs.

52. He who hears with devotion the story of these part incarnations becomes freed of all sins and passes away his time merrily, surrounded by his circle of friends; there is no doubt about this."

Thus ends the 22nd chapter in the fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the part incarnations of the several Devas.

ChapterXXIII—the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

1-2. Vyāsa said: "The six sons of Devakī being thus killed by Kaṁsa and the seventh child being miscarried, when Devakī was pregnant for the eighth time, Kaṁsa began to think of the cause of his own death as advised by Nārada and watched carefully, day and night, so that this time there would be born a son and there be no miscarriage.

3. On the other hand, Bhagavān Hari came down and rested on the body of Vasudeva as part incarnate and then entered into the womb of Devakī, in due order.

4. That very time the Goddess Yogamāyā, of Her own accord, entered into the womb of Yasodā in order to help the work of the gods.

5. Rohinī, the wife of Vasudeva was anxiously dwelling at that time through the fear of Kaṁsa in the Nanda Gokula; Balarāma, the part incarnate of Ananta, took his birth there as her son.

6. Kaṁsa then imprisoned Devakī, who was being worshipped by the gods, and engaged servants to take care of her.

7. Vasudeva, too, entered into the prison with his wife Devakī, thinking of his issue and also being attracted by his attachment towards his wife.

8. Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas, to accomplish the purpose of the gods began to grow regularly in the womb of Devakī, being incessantly adored and praised by the gods.

9-10. When the tenth month was complete, on the eighth day of the dark fortnight under the star Rohinī, Kaṁsa became much bewildered with fear and called on his Dānava followers and said, 'You must all carefully protect Devakī in the prison.

11-12. The son born from this eighth womb of Devakī will turn out my dire enemy; therefore do you all very carefully protect that child, my death

incarnate, so that the child may not be transferred anywhere else. O Daityas! I will be able to sleep without any anxiety then, when I will be successful. Kill this eighth son of Devakī who has become the source of my constant worries and endless troubles.

13. Equipped with swords, shafts and bow and darts do you all incessantly watch with eyes open on all sides, leaving off your sleep and drowsiness.'

14. Vyāsa said: "Thus ordering the demons, the king Kaṁsa, who had become worn out with this anxiety and was bewildered with fear, went quickly to his own palace room; but he could not find any trace of happiness.

15-18. On the other hand Devakī, at dead of night in that prison, told Vasudeva, 'O king! My birth pain has come; I see here many terrible guards, who are watching and protecting us; what shall I do now? Yasodā, the wife of Nanda, promised me before this: "O respected one! Your heart is almost burnt up with the fire of grief; therefore do you send to my house your son; I will protect him with utmost care; and especially to incur Kaṁsa's faith and belief, I will give you another son." O Lord! This is now a very hard moment; what are we to do now?

19. And again how are you to exchange the two sons? However let what may come, come to pass; now the moment of child birth has come; I am possessed by a feeling of shame not liable to be overcome. You better turn away your face; there is no other remedy here.'

20. Thus saying to that blessed Vasudeva, worshipped by the gods, Devakī, at dead of night, delivered a wonderful child.

21. The blessed Devakī looking on that exceedingly beautiful child, was struck with wonder and told her husband, her whole body being filled with joy:

22. 'O Lord! Look at the face of your newborn child, a very rare thing to see such a face as this. Alas! The son of my paternal uncle, Kaṁsa, will kill my this newborn child.'

23. 'Kaṁsa will do so.' Saying this, Vasudeva took up that child in his arms and began to look amorously at the face of that child of wonderful deeds.

24. Thus looking, Vasudeva thought 'What can I do now so as to relieve me from my sorrows owing to the future destruction of this child?'

25-27. While Vasudeva was thus anxiously pondering over, a Heavenly Voice clearly said: 'O Vasudeva! Quickly go to Gokula with the child. The keepers and guards I have made dead asleep by My Māyā. The eight very strong doors are now lying wide open. You better free yourself from your chains and take this child, keep Him in the house of Nanda and bring Yoga-māyā from there and come back here.'

28-29. Thus hearing the Heavenly Voice, he cast his glance at the doors and found them all wide open. O King! Very quickly then he took the child and stepped out of the prison, quite unnoticed by the guards and watchmen. Going to the banks of the Yamunā he found there the daughter of Kālindī flowing with great force and became anxious.

30-31. But the river Yamunā instantaneously turned out to be easily fordable, just knee-deep; then Vasudeva, guided by Yoga-māyā, crossed the Yamunā and betaking to an unfrequented road arrived at Gokul at dead of night. There, at the doorway of the house of Nanda, he began to see the cows, buffaloes, the wealth and property of Nanda.

32. At that very moment, there was born of Yaśodā the Mahā-Devī, the part of the Divine Yoga-māyā, incarnate of the three qualities.

33. Then the Mahādevī Yoga-māyā, assuming the appearance of a female artisan, taking that divine female child in her arms came there and handed her over to Vasudeva.

34. Vasudeva, too, delivered his child over to the lotus-like hands of the Devī and, taking the female child instead, quickly returned with his heart full of joy.

35. He went unto the prison, kept that female child in the bed of Devakī and remained aside, fearful and anxious.

36-37. But that child, the moment she was lulled to sleep, began to cry in a sonorous voice; the royal guards at once woke up on that cry, and being bewildered with fear, hurriedly went to their king and said 'O King! Come quickly. Devakī has brought forth a child.'

38-39. The King of the Bhojas, hearing their words, went there quickly and saw the doors open, called on Vasudeva 'O blessed one! Let me have the eighth son of Devakī, my death incarnate; I will at once kill that enemy of mine, born as part incarnate of Hari.'

40. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing Kaṁsa's words, Vasudeva handed over to him the female child, crying and very much bewildered with fear.

41. At the sight of the female child, the king was very much astonished and began to think that the Heavenly Voice and the seer Nārada's words turned out false:

42. 'How can Vasudeva be able to bring about, in this dreadful place, the unnatural act of turning male into a female? Especially, my guards are carefully watching the place. There is no doubt about this.

43. How has this female child come here? Where has that eighth-born child gone? I ought not to doubt in this matter, for the ways of Time are mysterious!'

44-46. Thinking thus, the cruel King Kaṁsa caught hold of that female child by her legs and, raising Her high up in the air, was going to strike Her against a stone, when the female child slipped out of his hands and flying into the air assumed a divine appearance and gently spoke to Kaṁsa, thus:

'What will you get by killing Me? Your powerful enemy is already born on the earth. O vilest of men! Disgrace to your family! He, the excellent human being Who is very difficult to be worshiped, will certainly kill you.'

47-49. Saying thus, the auspicious female child, able to go anywhere according to Her will, disappeared. Kaṁsa, astonished, returned to his own home, and becoming impatient with fear and anger, called all the Dānavas —Baka, Dhenuka, Vatsa and others—and addressed them thus: 'O Dānavas. Go all of you to serve my purpose. Kill anywhere the child whom you see just born.

50. Let Pūtanā, expert in killing children go today to Nanda's Gokula. My order is this: Any child recently born they must kill.

51. Dhenuka, Vatsaka, Keśi, Pralamba, and Vaka, etc., all should remain in Gokula to carry out my order.'

52. The cruel king Kaṁsa, thus ordering the Demons, went away to his own palace, and thinking on this matter over and over again became very much afflicted with fear and his mind got immensely depressed."

Thus ends the 23rd Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, on the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter XXIV—the stealing of Pradyūmna

1-2. Vyāsa said: "On the other hand, there, at the house of Nanda, early in the next morning, commenced the grand birthday festivity. Kaṁsa came to know, afterwards, by his spies as well as by general rumour, that at Gokula in the house of Nanda, a very joyous festival on a grand scale was being performed; he also knew before that the other wives of Vāsudeva, his animals and his servants were all staying at Nanda's residence in Gokula.

3-4. O Bhārata! Thus all these gave reasons to Kaṁsa to suspect the place Gokula. Especially Nārada told him before that the residents, the cowherds at Gokula, Nanda and others, their wives, Devakī and Vāsudeva were all Devas incarnates; and consequently they were his enemies.

5-7. Thus being brought to more confidence by Nārada's words, that vicious Kaṁsa, the disgrace to his family, was very angry and sent there his demons Pūtanā, Baka, Vatsa, the great Asura, the powerful Dhenuka and Pralamba. They were all killed by Kṛṣṇa of unsurpassable prowess. Śrī Kṛṣṇa held aloft also the hillock Govardhana (to protect the cowherds and cows, etc.) Hearing all these, Kaṁsa became certain also of his own death.

8. Lastly when the evil-minded Kaṁsa heard that the Daitya Keśī was also slain, then he made arrangements for a sacrifice, known as Dhanur-yajña; under this pretext wanted to bring over there at Mathurā the two brothers Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

9. The evil-minded Kaṁsa to effect the death of those two, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, of unsurpassable prowess, sent Akrūra to Gokula to bring them over to Mathurā.

10. Akrūra, the son of Gandinī, under the orders of Kaṁsa, went to Gokula and brought the two boys on a chariot to Mathurā.

11-12. On arriving at Mathurā, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa first broke the bow; killed Rājaka, the elephant Kubalaya, Cānūr, Mustika, Śala, Tośala and other athletes and warriors. Last of all, Hari the Lord of the Devas, holding Kaṁsa by his hair, killed him with utmost ease.

13. The enemy-destroyer Kṛṣṇa removed the sorrows of his father and mother, released them from their prisons and gave over the kingdom of Mathurā to Ugrasena (the father of Kaṁsa).

14-15. The high-minded Vasudeva, then, with the triple girdle made of Munja grass, performed the Upanayana ceremonies (wearing the sacred

thread round the body) of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and made Them accept the vow of *brahmācārya*. They then departed to the hermitage of the holy Muni Sandīpani to acquire knowledge. Learning all the *vidyās* (knowledge) there, They returned quickly to Mathurā.

16. The two sons of Ānakadundubhi stayed there and on attaining their twelfth year, became proficient in all the branches of learning and became very powerful.

17. At that time Jarāsandha, being grieved at the killing of his son-in-law Kaṁsa, collected a strong and numerous army and marched to Mathurā.

18. Seventeen times Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, attacked Mathurā, and seventeen times he was defeated by the ingenuity of the highly intelligent Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was of firm resolve and was then residing in Mathurā.

19. Lastly, Jarāsandha sent the Kālayavana (Black Yavana) to invade Mathurā. These Yavanas were brave and the lords of all Mlecchās (untouchables) and extremely terrific to the Yādavas. Kālayavana was a king of Yavanas and enemy of Kṛṣṇa and an invincible foe of the Yādavas. Kṛṣṇa finding it impossible to vanquish him in the field of battle, cunningly decoyed him to the cave where Mucukunda was sleeping who burnt him down. (Yavana means a Greek, an Ionian; then any foreigner, or barbarian. The word is applied at present to a Mahomedan or a European also.)

20-21. Hearing that Kālayavana was coming to attack the Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa the destroyer of Mādhu, called all the Yādavas and Baladeva and addressed them thus: 'O blessed ones! Now a cause of great terror has appeared amongst us; Kālayavana is being sent by our powerful enemy Jarāsandha to attack Mathurā. Now what to do? It is better to save one's life by leaving aside all our homes, wealth and army.

22. You should all know that Dvārakā is the place of our fathers and forefathers where we can safely and happily dwell; here there is a constant

source of anxiety and uneasiness that, though the place of our fathers and forefathers, ought to be avoided; never ought anyone to dwell here.

23. If you want to dwell at ease and comfort, you ought to dwell in that country or place which is adjacent to a sea or a mountain; where there is no fear from an enemy, the sages will always remain there.

24. See! The Bhagavān Hari, being afraid, as it were, of his enemy has taken refuge on the body of the thousand headed śesa serpent as his sleeping place and is sleeping at ease and comfort on the ocean. It seems likely that the enemy of Trīpurā, the great Śiva is also dwelling on the Kailāśa mountain.

25. We, too, are being constantly worried by our enemies here; therefore we ought not to live here any longer. We should all go to Dvārakā city with our friends, relatives and wealth.

26. Garuḍa, the king of the birds, has given us the detailed information of the city Dvārakā. That beautiful city is situated on the seashore in the vicinity of the Raivataka mountain.'

27. Vyāsa said: "The Yādava chiefs, hearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's utterances fraught with their welfare, were ready to depart to that place Dvārakā, attended by their friends, relatives and appurtenances.

28. They then collected their camels, mares and buffaloes, filled their conveyances with wealth, gems and precious stones, and marched out of their place.

29. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa went in front; the Yādavas and other subjects then marched in several parties.

30. Marching some days, they all reached Dvārāvatī. Then the portions of the city that were dilapidated or destroyed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa had them repaired by engineers, artisans and craftsmen.

31. Placing the Yādavas there, Keśava and Baladeva quickly returned to Mathurā and began to stay in that desolated city.

32. The extremely powerful king of the Yavanas arrived then at Mathurā. Kṛṣṇa knowing that the Yavana chief had come there, went out of the city.

33. The Bhagavān Madhusūdana, the destroyer of the boastings of Asuras and other people, dressed in yellow robes, appeared on foot before the Kālayavan with smile on his lips.

34. Seeing the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa before him, the treacherous Lord of the Yavanas, pursued him on foot to catch hold of him.

35. Where the powerful Rājarsi Mucukunda was sleeping soundly, the Bhagavān Hari led Kālayavana there.

36. There Śrī Kṛṣṇa, saw Mucukunda and vanished away at once; the king of the Yavanas on arriving there found the Rājarsi (the royal sage) there in deep sleep.

37. The wicked Yavana, mistaking Muchukunda for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, gave him a good kick. The powerful king Muchukunda got up and was very angry; his eyes became red and reduced that vicious Yavana instantly into ashes.

38. When Muchukunda burnt the Yavana, he saw the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa; he bowed down to that Supreme Deva, Vāsudeva, and went to the forest.

39. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then went back to the city Dvārakā with Rāma, made Ugrasena there the king and began to enjoy at His will.

40. At the marriage ceremony of Śiśupāla, at the palace of the king of Vidarbha, Janārdan Viṣṇu carried away by force Rukminī, the bride elect from the *svayaṁvara* assembly (where the husband is elected by the bride herself) and afterwards married her according to the rule called *rākṣasa-vidhi* (one of the eight forms of marriage in Hindu Law in which a girl is

forcibly seized and carried away after the defeat or destruction of her relatives in battle).

41-42. Afterwards He brought also Jāmbavatī, Satyabhāmā, Mitravindā, Kālindī, Lakṣmanā, Bhadrā, and auspicious Nāgnajitī (the daughter of the king Nagnajit) on various occasions and married them. O Lord of the earth! These eight women were the best and most beautiful of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's wives.

43. Rukminī first gave birth to the beautiful child Pradyūmna, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed the religious ceremony at the birth of his child.

44. Then the powerful Dānava named Śamvara stole away the little baby from the lying-in chamber, carried him to his own city and made him over under the charge of Māyāvatī.

45. Coming to know that His son had been stolen away, Śrī Kṛṣṇa became very much overpowered with sorrow and took the shelter of the Supreme Goddess, the Devī, with a heart full of devotion.

46-47. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then began, to chant, in sweet auspicious tone, hymns in alphabets conveying the highest meanings, in adoration of the Yoga-māyā, Who slew Vṛtrāsura and other Daityas with ease and alacrity:

48. 'O Mother! I, in my former birth as the son of Dharma, appeased You by my ascetic practices in the hermitage of Badari and worshipped You with various offerings; O Mother! Have you now forgotten all my devotion to You?

49. O Mother! Has any evil-minded enemy stolen away my son from the lying-in chamber? Or have You Yourself done this to make a fun and see the amusement? It seems that some one of my enemies has done so to insult me; however, You, O Mother! ought not to put your devotee under this shameful condition.

50. O Mother! This Dwārakā city is well guarded; a very strong fort is built in its middle and my place is in the midst of that again; and the lying-in

chamber is again in the middle; I therefore must say that it is due to my bad luck that the child is stolen away!

51. O Mother! I did not go to the house of my enemy; the Yādavas also did not go there; this city is guarded by valiant soldiers; then how is it, under what charm, the baby has been stolen? O Mother! Now I come to know that it is due to Your Māyā; such things are common due to Your Māyā in the three worlds.

52. O Mother! When I am ignorant of Your deepest mysteries, how can there exist anyone among the little-minded *jīvas* who can know your doings? My watchmen could not see where my child was taken away and who has stolen him. O Mother! I come to the conclusion that it is hidden behind the screen of Your Māyā.

53. O Mother! It is not strange with You. You moved away My elder brother in the fifth month from the womb of my mother to the chaste woman Rohinī Devī, though situated at a great distance and not connected with any male persons; and thus Baladeva was born to Rohinī. This is now known to all.

54. Mother! You are incessantly creating, preserving, and destroying this whole universe by the mixture of the three qualities. Who can know Your sin-destroying doings? Mother! There is no need of dwelling at length. Suffice it to say that You, no doubt, are doing all that are being done in this whole universe.

55. You first create the joy at the birth of a child; again You load us with heavy burdens of sorrows due to the separation from that child; thus you are always sporting; otherwise how my joy at the birth of my child would thus be rendered quite useless?

56. The mother of that child is always weeping like a ewe, straying from a flock; she is giving vent to her sorrows always to me; O Kind-hearted! Being thus endowed with illimitable prowess and understanding, do You

not know my troubles? O Mother! You are the only source of consolation to one, suffering from the sorrows of this world. There is no doubt about this.

57. O Goddess! The wise seers say that the birth of a child in any house is the highest bliss there, and the death of a child is the greatest sorrow that can befall to any house. Therefore, O Mother! What shall I do in this? What shall I say more than that my heart is going to burst, due to the disappearance of my child.

58. O Mother! I will perform all the necessary sacrifices, take up vows, perform all sorts of worship to the entire satisfaction of the great Fate, ordainer of all things; You be pleased to remove my sorrow. O Mother! If my son be alive, kindly show him once to me. Mother! There is no other than You Who is fully capable to destroy this my pain and sorrow raging in my heart.'

59. Vyāsa said: "He who brings into practice things that are considered impracticable for the Devas and removes the load of the Goddess Earth with ease and alacrity, the same Savior of the world, Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus chanted hymns in adoration of the Great Goddess. The Devī then became visible to him and said:

60. 'O Lord of the Devas! Do not any longer be sorrowful and miserable; there had been a curse on you before; and, for that reason, the Daitya Śambara has stolen away your son by his demonic magic.

61. Therefore, when your son will grow sixteen years old, then he will, by My Grace, kill the Daitya perforce and will return to You. There is no doubt about this.'

62. O king! Thus saying these words full of hope and confidence, the Great Goddess Caṇḍīkā, of formidable prowess, disappeared. Kṛṣṇa too, quit his sorrows due to the bereavement of his child, and began to spend his time in happiness and peace."

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Fourth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the stealing away of Pradyūmna.

Chapter XXV—Devī's Highest Supremacy

1. The King said: "O Best of Munis! Hearing these sorrows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the part incarnate of Viṣṇu Bhagavān, I am in doubt about your utterances.

2. Behold! Bhagavān Vāsudeva is the part incarnate of Nārāyaṇa; how could the Asura Śambara steal away His son from the lying-in chamber!

3. The beautiful Dvārakā city is specially well-guarded; the lying-in chamber is again within the center of that; under these circumstances, how was it that the Daitya could enter there and steal away the child?

4. O Son of Satyavatī! How was it that Vāsudeva could not know that? This appears very strange to me!

5. O Brāhmaṇa! Please explain to me why was that child stolen away from the lying-in chamber, though Śrī Kṛṣṇa was staying there at the city; and how was it that He was not able to know this beforehand?"

6. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Māyā called Śāmbhavī (Pārvatī) is the cause; it fascinates and deludes the minds of human beings. Thus it is known to us. Who is there in this world that is not deluded by this Māyā?

7. The *jīvas*, no sooner they are born as human beings, are immediately overcome with human qualities; the Deva or Asura qualities or their natures do not then visibly exist.

8-9. O King! Hunger, thirst, sleep, fear, lassitude, delusion, sorrow, doubt, pleasure, egoism, old age, disease, death, ignorance, knowledge, displeasure, envy, jealousy, pride and weariness; all these human qualities are seen to exist in human embodiments.

10-11. Behold! The night-wanderer Rākṣasa Māricha assumed, by his Māyā, the form of a golden deer and came before Śrī Rāmacandra; and Rāmacandra was not the least aware of it. Then the stealing away of Sītā, the death of Jatāyu, Rāma's going to the forest on the very day of his installation to the throne of Ayodhyā; the death of his father due to his bereavement, all these Śrī Rāmacandra did not know a bit beforehand.

12. When Rāvaṇa stole away Jānakī and carried her by force, Rāma did not know this before or after that event had happened. He wandered from forest to forest in search of Her, like a quite ignorant man.

13. Afterwards He killed Bāli, the son of Indra and with the help of the monkeys erected a bridge across the ocean, and crossing it, went to Laṅkā.

14. He sent the chief monkeys to all the quarters in search of Sītā and had to undergo all the troubles of deadly battles in the great battlefield.

15. The most powerful Raghunandana was tied down by Nāgapāśa (snakes) and was afterwards freed from it by Garuḍa.

16. Then being furiously enraged, the great Rāghava slew Kumbhakarṇa, Nikumbha, Megha Nāda and Rāvaṇa.

17. Janārdan Rāmacandra was not aware of the innocence of Sītā; and therefore He made her take an oath about the purity of Her character, and even made Her undergo an ordeal of fire.

18. Afterwards Rāmacandra, the son of Daśaratha, had to banish his dear blameless Sītā on the mere ground of bad name imputed to her by some ignorant person and on the fear that he would be thus blamed by the public.

19. He did not know that Kuśī and Lava were His two sons, born in the forest. Only afterwards when the Muni Vālmikī told him, He came to know of them.

20. Behold, also Rāmacandra could not know about the departure of Sītā to Pātāla; getting angry once He was about to kill his brother Lakṣmana even.

21. Rāma, the slayer of the Rākśasa Khara did not know that Kāla Puruṣa was coming to him. He, incarnating in the human body, did acts all becoming to a man. Similarly Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Yadu, taking human birth did acts all like a man. What more discussion can there be on this?

22. Lo! From the very outset He fled to Gokula out of fear of Kaṁsa; afterwards he fled out of fear of Jarāsandha to Dvārakā city.

23. Knowing all the rites and ceremonies of the *sanātana-dharma* (the Eternal Religion) He stole away Rukminī who was chosen as bride elect by Śiśupāla. This act was very irreligious of Him.

24. Śambara Daitya stole away his newly-born child and Kṛṣṇa lamented for this. Afterwards on coming to know of the real state of things from the Goddess Bhagavatī, He was very glad. Therefore it can be easily seen from all these circumstances that He had to yield to pleasures and to undergo remorse like ordinary human beings.

25. Again, under the orders of his wife Satyabhāmā, He had to go to Heaven to bring the Pārijāta tree and had to fight with Indra. This shows clearly that He was under the subjection of His wife.

26. In that battle Hari with disc in hand defeated Indra, the Lord of the Devas, took away the Kalpa tree and retained the prestige of His respected wife, whom He had offended.

27. Again Satyabhāmā tied down Hari against a tree and presented Him as a gift to Nārada; afterwards she, the passionate woman, freed Kṛṣṇa on paying an equivalent of gold coins.

28-29. On seeing Rukminī's many sons, Pradyūmna and others, all qualified with diverse qualifications, His wife Jāmbavatī prayed to Śrī

Kṛṣṇa with humility so that she may have also many beautiful sons. For her sake, Kṛṣṇa firmly resolved to practice *tapasyā* and went to the place where the great devotee of Śiva, Upamanyu, was staying.

30. Hari desiring to have sons engaged Upamanyu as His spiritual guide and obtained from him the *mantram* called Pāśupata, became a *daṇḍī* (*sannyāsī* holder of a staff) and shaved His head.

31-32. In the first month He subsisted on fruits only, meditated on Śiva and repeated silently the Śiva *mantra*. Thus He practiced very severe austerities. In the second month He subsisted on water only and stood on only one leg. In the third month he lived on air only and stood on the end of His great toe.

33-36. Thus time passed away. In the sixth month the God Rudra, holding Moon on His forehead, was pleased with His asceticism and devotion, and appeared before Him on that spot. The God Mahādeva came on a bull; He was attended by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and the other Devas, Yakṣas and Gandharvas and spoke thus: 'O high-minded Kṛṣṇa of Yadu's descent; I am pleased with Your severe asceticism; now ask Your desired boon; I will grant it just now. I fulfil all the desires of My devotees; what desire, then, there can be that is not fulfilled, when I am seen by the devotees!'

37-38. Vyāsa said: "The son of Devakī was very glad to see the God Śaṅkara and fell prostrate at His feet. Then that eternal supreme God of the Devas began to recite hymns in praise of Him in a tone as deep as the rumbling of a cloud.

39. Kṛṣṇa said: 'O Deva of the Devas! O Lord of the world! You alone destroy the misfortunes and sorrows of all the beings. O Destroyer of Asuras! You are the Cause and Creator of this universe. I salute Thee.

40. O One having a blue throat! I bow down to Thee! O Holder of the trident! I again and again salute Thee! O Lord of Pārvatī! You destroyed Dakṣa's sacrifice. I salute Thee.

41. I am blessed by Thy sight, and think Myself satisfied as having discharged all my duties. O Virtuous One! My human birth is crowned with success by saluting Thy feet.

42. O Lord of everything! O three-eyed! I am tied down to this world by my attachment towards my wives; now I take refuge unto Thee to free me from these bonds.

43. O Destroyer of sorrows! I am very much troubled on attaining this human birth; O Bhava! I am afraid of this world; and hence I take refuge unto Thee; now save Me.

44-45. O Destroyer of cupidity! I experienced a good deal of troubles in the womb; next out of fear to Kaṁsa I had to go to Gokula where I suffered much pains; there I had to obey the orders of cowherds; there I had to attend as Nanda's cowherd, the pasturing of his cows and was constantly suffocated with the awful dust thrown up by the cows; I had to wander constantly in the wild forests of Vṛṇḍāvan.

46. O Omnipresent One! I had to leave my dear ancestral place, the city of Mathurā, a rare place not to be found anywhere else, out of the great fear of Kāla Yavana, the king of the Mlecchas, and had to go to Dwārakā city.

47-48. O Lord! In order to preserve the cause of religion, I had to hand over the best prosperous kingdom to Ugrasena, due to the curse of Yayāti. My elders made him the king of the Yādavas; following their examples, I gave him the kingdom and am now serving him always like his servant.

49. O Śambhu! The householder's life is exceedingly troublesome; it makes one subject to one's wife and to go against his religion. There we are always dependent on others; and no word is heard or dreamt even, how to free oneself from those bondages of the world. Oh! What an irony of Fate.

50. O Destroyer of cupid! My wife Jāmbavatī, on seeing the sons of my wife Rukminī has urged me to practice this *tapasyā* so that she might get excellent sons born to her also.

51. O Lord of the Devas! O Lord of the world! I am engaged in this asceticism with the desire to get sons; O Deva! I feel shame in asking You for sons!

52. You are the lover of your devotees; You give eternal freedom; You are the Lord of all the Devas. By worshipping and satisfying You, who is so foolish as to ask for this trivial and transient thing!

53. O Omnipresent One! O Śambhu! O Lord of the world! Knowing You as the giver of salvation, still I, deluded by Māyā, ask from You, being requested by my wife, this happiness that sons be born to me of my wife.

54-55. O Śaṅkara! This world and its concerns are the abode of all sorrows; it is the cause that brings in all sorts of pains and troubles, and it is transient and will go to destruction. I know all this; still my mind does not desist from it.'

56. Vyāsa said: "O great and powerful king! The God of Gods, Mahādeva, thus praised and adored by Govinda, the Destroyer of enemies, replied: 'You will get many sons.

57. You will get sixteen thousand one hundred wives and no doubt you will get ten sons of each of them. These sons will be very powerful and valorous.'

58-60. The good-looking Śaṅkara saying these words remained silent; then Śrī Kṛṣṇa bowed down at the feet of Girijā, the wife of Śaṅkara. Then the Goddess Pārvatī addressed repeatedly to Vāsudeva and said: 'O mighty armed! O Kṛṣṇa! O best of human beings! You will be the typical exemplary householder; all people will try to follow You. When one hundred years

will pass away, your race will be extinct due to the curse of the Brāhmaṇa and Gāndhāri.

61. Your sons and the other Yādavas will lose their senses on drinking liquor; they will kill each other in the battlefield and thus will be extirpated.

62. Then you and your elder brother Balabhadra (Balarāma) will give up your bodies and will ascend to the Heavens; O mighty person! Do not grieve in matters that cannot be avoided.

63. You should know that there can be no remedy to what will inevitably come to pass; therefore no one is to grieve for them; this is all along My view.

64. O Madhusūdana! After Your death, due to the curse of Astāvakra Muni, your wives will be forcibly stolen away by indomitable robbers. There is no doubt about this.'

65. Vyāsa said: "When Devī Pārvatī thus spoke, Śambhu, with the other gods disappeared; Kṛṣṇa too, bowed down to Upamanyu and went back to the city of Dvārakā.

66-67. Therefore, O King! Though Brahmā and the other Devas are heard to be the lords of the world, still they are all being tossed hither and thither by the waves of the ocean of Māyā. They are all like wooden dolls subject to Māyā.

68. As their previous *karmas*, so their several manifestations in the field of action, by the Great Māyā, the incarnate of Parā Brahman.

69. She has no differences nor any want of mercy; that Goddess of the universe is always leading the *jīvas* towards the eternal freedom from Māyā.

70. Had She not created this world, moving and unmoving and if She had not remained there as the Controller of the *jīvas* in the shape of unshakeable consciousness the *kūtasthya-caitanya*, this whole world would have become devoid of any consciousness, like an insentient substance and would have dissolved in the *tāmasī-māyā* (sheer darkness). There is no doubt about this.

71. Therefore that Goddess of the Universe has, through Her mercy, created all these worlds and *jīvas*, and resting incarnate in each *jīva*, is directing each and every of them according to his *karmik* merits and demerits.

72. Therefore it is a matter not to be doubted that Brahmā and the other gods are all under this Māyā; the Suras and Asuras are subject to Her.

73. Therefore, O king! Know this as certain that the Great Goddess moves and enjoys freely according to Her will; She is not dependent on anybody. Therefore it is the duty of everyone to serve and worship that Devī with whole head and heart.

74. In these three worlds there is nothing higher or more excellent than Her. Therefore this birth cannot be crowned with success in any other way than remembering that highest force, the Parāśakti and Her place.

75-77. One should always think, without any difference, of that Eternal World Mother, thus: 'Let me not be born in that family which has not that Supreme Goddess for its presiding Deity; I am that Goddess Bhagavatī and no other; I am Brahman, untouched by sorrows.'

One should hear first from the mouth of one's spiritual guide; next by hearing *Vedānta* and other religious scriptures, one should first form an idea of that Bhagavatī; and then if one daily meditates on that Goddess, the highest Self incarnate, with one-minded devotion, one will get within a short period, the eternal freedom (*mokṣa*); else there is not the least chance of becoming free, even if one performs innumerable good works.

78. Śvetāśvatara and other pure-hearted Ṛṣis obtained this freedom from the bondages of Māyā by meditating, in their hearts, on this highest Self and nothing else.

79. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and the other Devas, Gaurī, Lakṣmī and other goddesses, all worship This Supreme Goddess, of *saccidānanda* Parā Brahmanī.

80. O pure-hearted king! I answered all that you asked me, terrified with the fears of this world; what more do you want to hear?

81-82. O king! I have described this wonderful *Purāṇa* narrative, destructive of sins, productive of virtue. He who daily listens to this *Bhāgavatam* equal alike to *Veda*, becomes freed from all sorts of sins, goes to the region of the highest Goddess and passes his time in the midst of the highest glory. There is no doubt about this."

83. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! This *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*, called otherwise the Fifth *Purāṇam* was recited, in detail, in days of yore by Vyāsa. Whatsoever I heard from him, I have now told exactly the same to you."

Here ends the 25th Chapter in the Fourth Skandha of Srīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa on the Devī's Highest Supremacy. Here ends as well the Fourth Skandha.

Fifth Skandha

Chapter I—the superiority of Rudra over Viṣṇu

1-5. The Ṛṣis said: "The great legendary story, the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, supremely divine, destructive of all sins, has been narrated by you, O Sūta! But O Blessed One! You, though highly intelligent, have dwelt on it not at a great length; hence many doubts are cropping up in our minds. A very difficult *tapasyā* was performed by Vāsudeva the part incarnate of Viṣṇu, who had to go to forest to worship Śiva. Next, it has been known that the Devī Pārvatī, the part incarnate of the Great Mother, the Mother of the universe, the Supreme and Perfect offered boons to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How did it then come to pass that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being himself a God, had to worship Pārvatī and Mahādeva? Is it that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was inferior to Mahādeva and Pārvatī? This is our doubt."

6-7. Sūta replied: "Hear then the reasons, O noble Ṛṣis! that I heard from Vyāsa; I will now sing before you those meritorious deeds Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The son of Parīkṣit, the intelligent Janamejaya had also the same doubts that you now have, when he heard the story before from Vyāsa; and he asked the same questions that you now ask.

8-11. Janamejaya said: 'O son of Bhagavatī! I have heard from you much about the Supreme Goddess, the Highest Cause; still the doubts are not leaving me. O Fortunate One! Kṛṣṇa the Deva of the Devas, Viṣṇu incarnate, worshipped Śambhū and had to perform dire penances; this is my great wonder! He is the soul of all the *jīvas*, the One Ruler and Lord of this world and He is able to confer all the *siddhis;* how is it, then, that Lord Hari had to perform very difficult asceticism like an ordinary mortal? He who is able to create this universe, moving and non-moving, He who is able to preserve and destroy it, why did He practice such a terrible penance?'

12-54. Vyāsa said: "True it has been said by you that Vāsudeva the Janārdana, is the destroyer of the Daityas and He is able to create and preserve the Devas and do all other acts for them. But the Great Lord assumed a human body; therefore he had to perform his duties like a man and observe the *varnāśrama-dharma* pertaining to human beings. Respecting the elderly persons, worshipping the spiritual teachers, doing service to the Brāhmaṇas, adoring and propitiating the Devas, feeling sorrow at times of sorrow, feeling pleasure at times of happiness, feeling dejection or expressing censure or scandal, or having sexual intercourse with women—in other words, to feel lust, anger, greediness and other passions when their proper time arises. All these are natural to all human beings; how then can Śrī Kṛṣṇa though intrinsically of pure qualities, become *nirguṇa* (devoid of human qualities) when he assumed a human body which is *saguṇa*, i.e., with qualities. O Ruler of men! The extinction of the Yādava race by the curse of Gāndhārī the daughter of Subala, and the curse of a Brāhmaṇa, Kṛṣṇa's leaving his human coil, the stealing away of his wives, the robbing of their wealth on the way by the dacoits of the *āvīra* tribe, Arjuna's becoming powerless to hurl any weapons on those dacoits, Kṛṣṇa's not knowing anything about the stealing away of Pradyumna and Aniruddha from his Dvārakā palace, these all correspond verily to exertions and failings appropriate to human bodies.

Again the Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa is the part incarnate of Viṣṇu, and Vāsudeva is the part incarnate of the Ṛṣi Nārāyaṇa; hence what wonder is there, if Vāsudeva be seen to adore and propitiate Śiva? Śiva is the God of gods; and He is the Lord of all the causal bodies that exist in the state of *suśupti* (deep sleep). In this respect, Śiva is the creator of Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu worships Him in this light. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and others are all part incarnations of Viṣṇu; so there is no wonder if they worship Śiva. The *prānava, AUM* is composed of three and a half letters. letter *A* is Bhagavān Brahmā; the letter *U* is Bhagvān Hari; the letter *M* is Bhagvān Rudra and the half letter *ṁ* (*bindu*) is Maheśvarī, the Supreme Mother of the universe. The sages, therefore, consider Viṣṇu superior to Brahmā; they again consider Rudra superior to Viṣṇu and Māheśvarī (the *turīya* state) again superior to Rudra. The

speciality of the half-letter is that it can never be uttered; it is the symbol of the eternal Devī. In all the *śāstras*, therefore, the superiority of the Devī is established. Viṣṇu is superior to Brahmā; Rudra is superior to Viṣṇu. Therefore no doubt can arise in Kṛṣṇa's worshipping Śiva. It is through the will of Śiva that a second Rudra originated from the forehead of Brahmā to offer boons to him (i.e., to Brahmā). This second Rudra is venerable and entitled to all worship; what to speak of the first Rudra? O King! It is through the proximity of the Devī that the importance and superiority of Śiva is thus established.

Thus the incarnations of Hari arise in *yuga* after *yuga* through the intervention of the Yogamāyā; so there is no need to discuss on this point. Why to Acyuta alone? to Brahmā and Śiva also She gives troubles for getting involved into incarnations, She the Yoga-māyā who is indirectly, with the twinklings of Her eyes, creating, preserving and destroying this universe. It is the Yoga-māyā that caused Kṛṣṇa to be transferred from His lying-in chamber to the village Vraja and then protected Him in the house of the cowherd Nanda; afterwards took Him to Mathurā for the destruction of Kaṁsa, whence He was led again out of Jarāsandha's fear to the city Dvārakā. It is She that created from Her own self the eight *nāyakās* (the leading mistresses) and also sixteen-thousand-fifty women for the pleasure and enjoyment of Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān, the incarnation of Ananta (Viṣṇu Bhagavān); thus Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān was made completely subservient to them just like a perfect slave. When a young woman, though she is alone, can bind a man down by the network of Māyā like strong iron chain, what wonder is there that the sixteen-thousand-fifty women would make Kṛṣṇa play in their hands like a Śuka bird (parrot) and make Him an instrument to serve any purpose that they liked. Śrī Kṛṣṇa got himself so much under the control of Satyabhāmā that He went gladly under her commands to Indra's Heaven to get the Pārijāta flowers. There he had to fight with Indra and subsequently stole away the Pārijāta tree and gave it to Satyabhāmā as a very valuable ornament to be kept in her room. Behold! The same Kṛṣṇa, by His own prowess, defeated Śiśupāla and others for the preservation of religion and then stole away Rukminī the daughter of Bhīma, and

afterwards married her as his legal wife; where is the rule, then observed that it is a sin to take away another's wife?

Thus all embodied beings get themselves subdued by *ahaṅkāra* and do acts, good or bad, confounded and deluded by the network of *moha* that always drags one down. From the Mūlā-Prakṛti are born Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Hara and from the *tāmasik ahaṅkāra* of Prakṛti is created this whole cosmos, moving and non-moving. The lotus-born Brahmā becomes free when he is free from *ahaṅkāra;* otherwise He becomes engaged in this world's affairs. When freed from this *ahaṅkāra*, all the *jīvas* become free; and their houses, wealth, wives, sons and brothers are quite powerless to tie them down; but when bound by *ahaṅkāra*, the *jīvas* come under their control. O king! This *ahaṅkāra* is the cause of bondage to all the beings: "I am the doer, this work is done by my power; or this I will do myself." Thinking thus, the embodied beings fall themselves under this bondage. An earthen pot cannot be made without earth; no effects can be visible without a cause; consequently Viṣṇu is preserving this universe because of this *ahaṅkāra* imposed on him by Prakṛti. The human beings are always drowned in their cares and anxieties simply because they are bound by this *ahaṅkāra;* when they become free from *ahaṅkāra*, their cares and anxieties at once vanish. *Moha* (delusion) comes out of *ahaṅkāra;* world and the enjoyments thereof come out of *moha;* otherwise how can it be accounted for, that Hari and others, the mine of all good and auspiciousness, take their several incarnations in various wombs? Neither *moha* nor this world comes to those that are bereft of *ahaṅkāra*.

Men are of three kinds—*sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. O king! Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are sprung respectively from the *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik ahaṅkāras*. In these three, the three *ahaṅkāras* are always to be found; so the Munis that have realized the Real Essence declare. They are all bound by this *ahaṅkāra;* there is no doubt about this. The Paṇḍitas of dull intellect, and deluded by Māyā declare that Viṣṇu takes various incarnations out of His own free will; for when it is seen that men of even inferior intellects do not entertain any desire to enter into the wombs, painful and terrible; then

how will Viṣṇu, the holder of the discus, like to come into this womb? The slayer of Madhu, the Vaiṣṇavas say, entered all at once into the wombs of Kauśalyā and Devakī, full of faeces and other dirty things, of His own free will. But you must think out what happiness can Madhusūdana, quitting his Vaikuṇṭha heavens, attain in this womb, full of so many troubles, and where arise, like poisons, hundreds of cares and thoughts to torment an individual! Especially when it is seen that human beings perform asceticism, sacrificial *yajñas* and do various charities, that they would avoid thus entering in wombs, which is very painful and terrible. How can Bhagavān Viṣṇu be called independent? If so, He would never have yielded to enter into various wombs. Therefore, O king! Know this that this whole universe is under the control of Yoga-māyā; the Devas, men, birds, what more everything from Brahmā down to a blade of grass, are all under the control of Yoga-māyā. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Hara all are bound by the rope of Her Māyā. So they roam easily by Her Māyā from womb to womb like a spider."

Here ends the First Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the superiority of Rūdra over Viṣṇu in the MahāPurāṇam of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa, consisting of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter II—the birth of Dānava Mahiṣa

1-2. The king said: "Lord! You have described fully the glory of the Mahā-Mayā Yogeśvarī; now describe Her life and character; I am very eager to hear about them. This whole universe, moving and nonmoving, has been created by Maheśvarī; who is there that desires not to hear Her Glory?"

3-7. Vyāsa spoke: "O king! You are very intelligent; I will describe in detail all this to you; whoever does not describe Her glory to the peaceful and faithful is certainly low-minded. In days of yore when Mahiṣāsura was the ruler of this world, a terrible battle ensued between the Devas and Dānava forces on this earth. O king! Mahiṣāsura went to the mountain of Sumeru and performed a very severe and excellent *tapasyā*, wonderful even to the

gods. O king! Meditating on his *iṣṭa-devatā* (the deity for his worship) in his heart for full ten-thousand years, then Brahmā the Grandfather of all the *lokas*, was pleased with him. The four-faced Brahmā arrived there on his swan carrier, asked Mahiṣāsura. 'O One of virtuous soul! Ask from me what is your desired object; I will grant thee boon.'

8. Mahiṣa said: 'O Lord, Lotus-eyed! I want to become immortal! therefore O Thou, the Grandfather of the Devas! Dost thou do for me so that I have no fear of death.'

9-11. Brahmā said: 'O Mahiṣa! Birth must be followed by death, and death must be followed by birth; this is the eternal law of nature. Then know this as certain that when one is born, one must die; and when one dies, one will be born. O Lord of the Dānavas! What more to say than this, that high mountains, vast oceans, and all the beings will die when time will come. O Ruler of the earth! You are virtuous; therefore ask any other boon than this immortality; I will grant that to you.'

12-13. Mahiṣa said: 'O Grandsire! Grant, then, that no Deva, Dānava, nor human being of the male sex can cause my death. There is none among women who can cause my death. Therefore, O Lotus-eyed! Let woman be the cause of my death; how can women slay me! The are too weak to kill me!'

14. Brahmā said: 'O Lord of the Dānavas! Your death will certainly occur, at any time, through a woman; O highly fortunate one! No man will be able to cause your death.'

15. Vyāsa said: "Thus granting him the boon, Brahmā went to his own abode; the lord of the Dānavas, too, returned to his place, very glad."

16. The king said: "O Bhagavān! Whose son was this powerful Mahiṣāsura; how his birth took place? and why, too, did he get a body of a buffalo?"

17-26. Vyāsa said: "O king! Rambha and Karambha were the two sons of Danu; these two Dānavas were far famed in this world for their preeminence. O king! They had no issues; hence, desirous of sons, they went to the sacred banks of the Indus (Pañcha Nada) and there performed severe asceticism for long years. Karambha got himself submerged in water and thus began his severe *tapasyā;* while the other, Rambha, had recourse to a juicy peepul tree haunted by Yakṣinīs, and there began to worship Fire. Rambha remained engaged in worshipping the Five Fires; knowing this, Indra, the Lord of Śachī, was pained and hurried thither, being very anxious. Going to Pañcha Nada, Indra assumed the form of a crocodile and caught hold of the legs of the wicked Karambha and killed him. Hearing of the death of his brother, Rambha got very much enraged and wishing to offer his own head as an oblation to the Fire, he wanted to cut off his own head; he, being infuriated, held the hairs of his head by his left hand, and, catching hold of a good axe by his right hand, was on the point of cutting it, when the Fire gave him knowledge, desisted him from this act and spoke thus: 'You are stupid; why have you desired to cut off your own head; killing one's ownself is a great sin; and there is no means of deliverance from this sin. Why are you then ready to execute it? Do not seek your death now; what end will that serve you? Rather ask boons from me; thus you will get your welfare.'

27-31. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hearing thus the sweet words of Fire, Rambha quit the hold of his hairs and said: 'O Lord of the Devas! If thou art pleased, grant my desired boon that a son be born unto me who will destroy the forces of my enemy and who will conquer the three worlds. And that son will be invincible in every way by the Devas, Dānavas and men, very powerful, assuming forms at will, and respected by all.' The Fire said: 'O highly fortunate! You will get your son as you desire; therefore desist now from your attempting suicide. O highly fortunate Rambha! With any female of whichever species you will co-habit, you will get a son, more powerful than you; there is no doubt about this.'

32-50. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hearing thus the sweet words of the Fire as desired, Rambha the chief of the Dānavas, went surrounded by Yakṣas, to a beautiful place, adorned with picturesque sceneries; when one lovely she-buffalo, who was very maddened with passion, fell to the sight of Rambha. And he desired to have sexual intercourse with her, in preference to other women. The she-buffallo, too, gladly yielded to his purpose and Rambha had sexual intercourse with her, impelled as it were by the destiny. The she-buffalo became pregnant with his virile semen. The Dānava, too, carried the she-buffalo, his dear wife, to Pātāla (the lower regions) for her protection. On one occasion, another buffalo got excited and wanted to fall upon the she-buffalo. The Dānava was also ready to kill him. The Dānava came hurriedly and struck the buffalo for the safety of his wife; whereon the excited buffalo attacked him with his horns. The buffalo struck him so violently with his sharp horns that Rambha fell down senseless all of a sudden and finally died. Seeing her husband dead, the she-buffalo quickly fled away in distress and with terror, she quickly went to the peepul tree and took refuge under the Yakṣas. But that buffalo, excited very much and maddened with vigor, ran in pursuit of her, desiring intercourse with her. On seeing the miserable plight of the weeping she-buffalo, distressed with fear, and seeing the buffalo in pursuit of her, the Yakṣas assembled to protect her. A terrible fight ensued between the buffalo and the Yakṣas, when the buffalo, shot with arrows by them, fell down and died.

Rambha was very much liked by the Yakṣas; so they cremated his dead body for its purification. The she-buffalo, seeing her husband laid in the funeral pyre, expressed her desire to enter also into that fire. The Yakṣas resisted; but that chaste wife quickly entered into the burning fire along with her husband. When the she-buffalo died, the powerful Mahiṣa rose from his mother's womb from the midst of the funeral pyre; Rambha, too, emerged from the fire in another form out of his affection towards his son. Rambha was known as Raktavīja after he had changed his form. His son was thus born as a very powerful Dānava and became famous by the name of Mahiṣa. The chief Dānavas installed Mahiṣa on the throne. O king! The very powerful Raktavīja and the Dānava Mahiṣa thus took their births and

became invincible of the Devas, Dānavas and human beings. O king! I have now described to you the birth of the high-souled Dānava Mahiṣa and his getting the boon, in all detail."

Here ends the Second Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the birth of Mahiṣa Dānava in the Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam composed of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter III—the Daitya armies getting ready

1-14. Vyāsa said: "The very powerful Asura Mahiṣa, puffed up with vanity on his getting the boon, obtained sovereignty and brought the whole world under his control. He being the paramount power, began to protect the sea-girt earth acquired by the power of his own arms, over which he had the sole sovereignty, there being no other rival king nor any cause of the slightest fear. His Commander-in-Chief was then the very powerful Ciksura, maddened with pride; and Tāmra was in charge of the royal treasury, guarded by many soldiers. There were then many generals like Asilomā, Vidāla, Udarka, Vāskala, Trinetra, Kāla, Bandhaka and others, very proud, and each in charge of his own corps respectively and occupying this sea-girt earth.

O king! The powerful kings that reigned before were made subservient and tributary; and those that fought valiantly befitting the Kṣatriya line, were slain by Mahiṣa. The Brāhmaṇas over the earth became subservient to Mahiṣa and gave their *yajña* offerings to him. When that Mahiṣāsura got the sole sovereign sway of this world, he, proud of his boons, desired to conquer the Heavens. Then Mahiṣa, the Lord of the Daityas, desirous to send an envoy to Indra, the Lord of Śachī, instantly called for the messenger and spoke to him thus: 'Go, O hero! O valiant one! to Heaven. Act as my messenger and tell Indra fearlessly thus: "O thousand-eyed one! Quit the Heavens; go anywhere you like, or offer your service to the high-souled Mahiṣa! He is the lord; and if you take refuge unto him, he will certainly protect you. Therefore, O Lord of Śachī, better seek the protection

of Mahiṣa. If, O Balasūdana! Not willing, wield your Vajra at once; we know your powers; you were, in days of yore, conquered by our ancestors. O chief of the Sūras! You are the paramour of Ahalyā; your strength is well known, give battle or go anywhere you like."

15-21. Vyāsa said: "Hearing the messenger's words, Indra became very indignant, laughed and said: 'I did not know, O you stupid, that you were maddened with vanity; I will shortly give medicines for your master's disease. Now I will extirpate him by the roots; wise persons do not slay messengers; I therefore let you go. Better go and tell him what I say: "Son of a buffalo! If you are willing to fight, better come and do not delay. O Enemy of horse! (Buffaloes and horses are always at war with each other) Your strength is well-known to me; you are a grass eater and your appearance is stupid, idiotic; out of your horns I will make a good bow. You depend on your horns for your strength; that I well know. You are clever in striking with your horns; you don't know anything about warfare; therefore I will out off your both the weapons and render you powerless. You are very much puffed up with vanity due to that.'

22. Vyāsa said: "Indra having spoken thus, the messenger quickly returned to his haughty master Mahiṣa and saluting, spoke:

23-28. The messenger said: 'Indra counts you not even a fig, as he is surrounded by his Deva forces and considers himself quite sufficient. One's servant ought to speak true and pleasant before one's master; how can I utter the words before my master that were spoken by that brute Indra? Whereas the well-known maxim reigns in my mind withal that I am your well-wishing servant and I ought to speak truth before you, my master, and that truth is to be pleasant to hear also. If pleasant words I speak only, then I fail in my duty; at the same time, harsh words ought not to be spoken by me, your sincere well-wisher. My Lord! The cruel poison-like words that come from the mouth of an enemy, how can I, a servant of yours, utter those harsh sayings? O Lord of the Earth! I will never be able to utter those rude sayings that Indra has spoken.'

29-53. Vyāsa said: "Hearing the messenger's words full of meaning the grass-eater Mahiṣa Dānava got very angry and, waggling his tail behind his back, passed urine; then his eyes reddened with anger, he called the Dānavas before him and said: 'O Dānavas! The Lord of the Devas is firmly resolved on battle; therefore collect your forces; we will have to conquer that devil, the chief of the Sūras. Who can stand for him a my rival here! If hundreds and thousands of warriors like Indra come I do not fear any of them at all; O Dānavas, we will thoroughly put a end to him. His heroism is before those only that are peaceful and quiet before the ascetics that have become lean and thin by the penances; he is licentious and can only seduce other's wives by craftiness and arts. He is a thorough rogue and hypocrite, vicious and faultfinding; otherwise why does he put obstacles before others, depending for his strength only on the beauties of the Apsarās or heavenly prostitutes. He is treacherous to his very core; therefore he, being afraid at the very outset, took oaths, and entered into agreement with the high-souled Namuchi; afterwards, when his time turned favorable, that villain broke his treaty and treacherously killed him.

Again the powerful Viṣṇu is a thorough master of treachery and hypocrisy, the mine in taking oaths and can only show his vanity and is expert in that. He can assume many forms at will by his magic power. For these very reasons Viṣṇu had to take the form of a boar and kill Hiraṇyākśa; and again he had to take up a man-lion form to kill Hiraṇyakaśīpu. O Dānavas! Never shall I surrender myself to Viṣṇu, for I never place my trust in the words or deeds of Viṣṇu and his Devas. What can Indra or Viṣṇu do against me, when the most powerful Rudra is not able to fight against me in the battlefield! I will instantly defeat Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, Kuvera, Fire, Sun and Moon and get possession of their Heavens. On our conquering the Devas, we all shall get our share of *yajñas,* and we along with other Dānavas drink the Soma juice and enjoy ourselves in Heaven. O Dānavas! I have got the boon; what do I now care for the Devas? My death is not from men. What can a woman do to me? O my emissaries! Call without any delay the chief Dānavas from the nether regions and the mountains and make them my generals. O Dānavas! I can alone conquer all the Devas;

only to make the war arrangements look nice, that I am taking you to defeat them. There is no fear of mine from the Devas, consequent on the boon conferred on me. I will kill them by my hoofs and horns. I am not to be killed by Suras, Asuras, or men; therefore get yourselves ready to conquer the Devas. O Dānavas! After conquering the Heavens we will be garlanded with Pārijāta wreaths and we will enjoy the Deva women in the Nandana Garden. We will drink the milk of the heavenly milch cow that yields all desires and, intoxicated with the heavenly drinks, we will hear and see the music and singing the dancing of the Gandharvas there. You will all be served there with various bottles of wine by Urvasī, Menakā, Rambhā, Ghritāchī, Tillottamā, Pramadvarā Mahāsenā, Mira Kesī, Madotkatā, Viprachitti and others. Then be all ready at once for this auspicious occasion to march to Heavens and fight there with the Suras. And be pleased to call that pure-souled Muni Śukrācārya, the son of Bhṛgu and the *guru* of the Daityas, worship him and tell him to perform sacrificial ceremonies for the safety and victory of the Dānavas.'

"O king! Thus, ordering the chief Dānavas, the wicked Mahiṣa went to his abode with gladness."

Here ends the Third Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the Daitya armies getting ready in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter IV—War Counsels given by Indra

1-17. Vyāsa said: "O King! The messenger of the Dānavas having departed, Indra, the lord of the Devas, Yama, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Kuvera and other Devas called an assembly and addressed them thus: 'O Devas! the most powerful Mahiṣa, the son of Rambha, is now the king of the Dānavas; he is particularly expert in hundreds of magical illusions and has become haughty on the strength of his boon. O Devas! Mahiṣa has sent his messenger. He wants to take possession of the heaven; he came down to me and spoke thus: "O Indra! Quit your heaven and go anywhere you like,

or be ready to pay your homage to the high-souled Mahiṣāsura, the Lord of the Dānavas. The Dānava Chief never becomes angry with his opponent who becomes submissive like a servant; if you surrender and serve him, he will, out of mercy, grant an allowance to you. O Lord of the Devas! If you do not like this, then collect your forces and be ready to fight; no sooner than I return, than the Lord of the Dānavas will come here at once ready to give battle to you."

'Thus saying, the messenger of that wicked Dānava departed. Now what are we to do? O Devas! Think on that. O Devas! Even a weak enemy is not to be overlooked by a powerful opponent, especially when the enemy is powerful by his own powers and is ever energetic; never is he to be overlooked. It is always incumbent on us to make efforts, as best as we can, both by our body and mind as far as lies in our power; the result, victory or defeat depends entirely on Fate. It is useless to make treaty with a deceitful and dishonest person; we therefore never should make treaty with this person. You are all honest; that Dānava is dishonest; therefore ponder and ponder deeply, and ponder again; do you that which is proper. It is not advisable to go out at once for fight when we are unaware of our enemy's strength; let us therefore send spies—truthful, honest, motiveless and quick—to ascertain their strength, those who can easily enter amongst our enemies and yet who have no relation nor any interest in common with them. Our spies will ascertain correctly the arrangements of their forces, their movements, their numbers, who are their generals, what is their number and what is their strength—they will thoroughly examine and return here quickly. First, we will ascertain the strength of the forces of our opposite party, and then we will decide at once whether we will start for battle or seek protection within forts. Wise persons always consider before they act; any act done rashly leads in all respects to many troubles, and anything done after mature prejudgments leads to happiness; so the wise do. The Dānavas are all one in their heart and mind; therefore it is not advisable in any way to apply the principle of *bheda* (sowing principles of discord). Let our spies go there, ascertain their strength, return and inform us; we will then judge what principle is proper and apply to the expert

Dānavas. Any act done contrary to policy and expediency will undoubtedly produce effects contrary in every way just like a medicine which we have not tried already.'

18-22. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus counselling with the Devas, Indra sent expert spies to ascertain the true state of affairs. The spies, too, went into the abode of the Daityas without delay, made their searches thoroughly into every nook and corner, returned and told Indra all the strength of the Dānava forces. Indra was very much startled to know, then, of their arrangements. He immediately bade all the Devas be ready for battle and called for his high priest Bṛhaspati, expert in giving advices and began to consult with him how to carry on the warfare with that indomitable enemy, the Lord of the Asuras.

23-25. On Bṛhaspati, the best and famous of the Angirā family, taking his excellent seat, Indra thus said: 'O *guru* of the Devas! O Learned One! Please say what are we to do now in this critical juncture. You are omniscient; today you are our guide. The Demon Mahiṣa has become very powerful, very haughty; surrounded by Dānavas he is now coming to fight with us. You are expert in *mantras;* find out the remedy for us. Śukrācārya is the remover of all obstacles on their side; and that you are our safeguard is well known to us.'

26. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of Indra, Bṛhaspati, who is always ready to effect the Devas' purposes, thought intently on the subject, and said very shortly thus:

27-51. Bṛhaspati replied: 'O Lord of the Devas! O Venerable One! Be peaceful; have patience; when a difficulty comes, one should not, all on a sudden, lose one's patience. O Chief of the Immortals! Victory or defeat is completely under the control of Destiny: therefore intelligent ones should always be patient. O Śatakratu! What will unavoidably be done must come to pass; knowing this as certain, one would always be enthusiastic and exert one's powers. Everything is guided by Fate. Knowing this, the Munis devote themselves at all times solely filled with energy in their meditation

and *yoga* practices for final liberation. Therefore to show one's energy according to the rules of the daily practices ought to be indispensably done; and one should not repel or feel pleasure on failure or success; for that is under Fate. Success sometimes comes without the exercise of one's own powers, as seen in cases of the lame and the blind; and that is not a reason why one should be very glad. The embodied beings are all under Daiva (Fate); therefore even if success be not attained though one's own powers are exercised thoroughly, no one is to blame for that.

O Lord of the Suras! What to speak of forces, *mantras* or advice, or of chariots or weapons, nothing leads to success; It is Daiva, and only Daiva that makes one successful. This whole universe is under Daiva; therefore, we see powerful persons suffering pains, and weak ones getting happiness; intelligent ones sleeping without any food and fools enjoying merrily; distressed persons getting victory and powerful ones suffering defeats. What cares, then, ought one to entertain in this? O Lord of the Suras! Whatever is inevitable to come to pass, be it success or failure, one will lead one's energies to that end; therefore one needs to consider beforehand whether one's energies will be successful or not. In times of distress, one sees distress too much and in times of pleasure, one seeks pleasure too much; one's self, therefore one should not surrender to one's enemies: pleasure and pain. Pain and suffering are not felt so much in patience as when impatient; therefore one must practice patience when pain or pleasure comes. Indeed it is very difficult to bear oneself up in distress or happiness; therefore wise persons try not to let these feelings crop up at all from the very beginning: "I am always full, undiminishable, I am beyond these *prākritik* qualities. Who is there to suffer? What is suffering?" Thus one ought to think at that moment. "I am beyond the twenty-four *tattvas;* what pleasure or pain can, then, arise to me? Hunger and thirst are the *dharma* of *prāṇa;* pain and insensibility is the *dharma* of mind; age and death belong to this physical body. I am free from these six diseases; I am Śiva. Grief and delusion are the qualities of this body; what then do I care for them? 'I' am not the qualities of the body nor am 'I' the soul pertaining to that. I am beyond the seven transfigurations and changes; I am beyond this

prakṛti, Nature, and beyond the sixteen changes wrought by *prakṛti;* I am therefore eternally happy, I am beyond *prakṛti* and its transformation, then why am I to suffer pain always?"

O Lord of the Suras! Think on these and be without any passion. O Śatakratu! This attachment is the root of all miseries and non-attachment is the source of all happiness; therefore non-attachment is the chief means of the extirpation of all your troubles. Lord of Śaci! Nothing can be happier than contentment. If you find it difficult to practice dispassion, then apply discrimination and think of Fate, that comes inevitably to pass. O Lord of the Suras! Actions already done cannot die out without their effects being enjoyed. O Best of the Suras! Let all your intelligence be brought to action, let all the Devas lend their helping hands to you; what is inevitable must come to pass; what then can you care for your happiness or pain? O King! Happiness is felt for the expiation of good deeds, and pain is felt for the expiation of bad deeds; therefore wise persons get thoroughly delighted when their *puñya* ends. O King! Judge and hold a council today; then try your best. But what is unavoidable will come to pass, even if you try your best.'

Here ends the Fourth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the counsels given by Indra in the Māhā Purāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter V—Defeat of the Dānava forces of Mahiṣa

1-6. Vyāsa said: "Hearing this, the thousand-eyed Indra again asked Bṛhaspati to make preparations for war against Mahiṣāsura. Indra said: 'Without effort kingdoms are not attained, nor happiness, nor fame, nor anything; those who are weak extol effortlessness; but the powerful never praise that. Knowledge is the ornament of the ascetics and contentment is the ornament of the Brāhmaṇas; but for those who desire lordship over powers, effort and prowess to destroy one's enemies are their excellent ornaments. O Muni! I will kill this Mahiṣāsura by my heroism as I had, of

old, destroyed Vṛtra, Namuci and Balāsura. You are the Deva *guru;* therefore you and my thunderbolt are my strength. The immortal Hari and Hara also will help me in this. O *guru!* Preserver of my honor and prestige! Now recite the *mantras* calculated to remove all the obstacles towards my victory. I, too, am making preparations and raising up my own forces to wage up war against that Dānava Mahiṣa.'

7-13. Vyāsa said: "On hearing Indra's words, Bṛhaspati smiled and said, 'O Lord of the Devas! I see you are bent on fight. I will neither stimulate you to fight nor shall I make you desist from the purpose. The issue is doubtful. There may be defeat or there may be victory. O Lord of Śacī! You are not to blame at all in this matter; what is written in the Book of Fate will come to pass, be it victory or defeat. I am not aware of the future in this respect. O Child! You know already what an amount of suffering I had to endure in times gone by when my wife had been stolen. O Destroyer of the enemies! My wife had been stolen by Moon who turned out my enemy; living in my stage of an householder I was put to all sort of miseries, deprived of all my happiness. O Lord of the Suras! I am renowned in all the worlds as a man of much wisdom and intelligence. Where then was my intelligence, when Moon carried away, perforce, my wife? O Lord of the Suras! To my mind, the success or failure depends entirely on destiny; yet intelligent ones should always resort to efforts and be energetic.'

14-17. Vyāsa said: "O King! On hearing the words of Bṛhaspati, pregnant with truth, Indra went with him to Brahmā, took his refuge and saluting him said: 'O Grandsire! The Dānava is collecting a big army, and wants to conquer and take possession of the Heavens. All the other Dānavas have enrolled themselves in the list of his army; they are eager to fight and they are all very powerful and skilled in arts of warfare. I am therefore very afraid and have come to you. You know everything; please help me in this matter.'

18-20. Brahmā said: 'We all will go today to Mount Kailāśa, take Śaṅkara with us and go to Viṣṇu. There all the assembledDevas will hold a council

and consider the time and place when it will be settled whether it is proper or not to fight. For one who dares to do any act without considering one's strength and without any judgment, certainly courts his own downfall.'

21-35. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing this, Indra with the other Lokāpalas and Devas, headed by Brahmā, went to Kailāśā. Then they came to Śaṅkara and sang Vedic hymns to Him. Maheśvara became very much pleased and they, taking Him went to Vaikuṇṭha, the abode of Viṣṇu. Indra saluted Viṣṇu, sang hymns to Him, and told him about his errand thus: 'Mahiṣa has become very haughty on account of the favor bestowed on him; therefore we are very afraid an ask your help to relieve us from this danger).' Viṣṇu, then, hearing the cause of fear, told them: 'We all will fight and kill that Demon.'

Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus settling the question, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Hari, Indra and the other Devas riding on their own respective *vāhanas,* dispersed. While Brahmā on his vehicle Swan, Viṣṇu on his Garuḍa, Śaṅkara on his Bull, Indra on his elephant Airāvata, Kārtika on his peacock, and Yama the god of death on his *vāhana* the Buffalo, were on the point of going with the other Deva forces, the army of the Dānava Mahiṣa met them on their way, all fully equipped with arms and weapons. A dreadful fight then ensued between the Devas and the Dānavas.

Arrows, axes, *prāsas*, *musala* clubs, *paraśu* pickaxes, *gadā* clubs, *pattiśas*, *śūla* tridents, *cakra* discuses, *śakti* weapons, *tomaras, mudgaras, bhindipālas, lāngalas* and various other deadly weapons appeared on the scenes with which they fought against one another. The Commander-in-Chief of Mahiṣa, the very powerful Ciksura, shot five sharp arrows at Indra. The ever-ready and light-handed Indra cut off all of them with his arrows and struck at his heart heavily with his Ardhachandra (half-moon) arrow. The Commander-in-Chief struck by this arrow, fell senseless on the back of his elephant. Indra then struck the trunk of the elephant with his Vajra thunderbolt; the elephant, severely struck with the Vajra, then fled away into the Dānava's forces. The Lord of the Dānavas seeing this, got very

angry and addressed the general Vidāla 'O Hero! You are very powerful; go then and kill first that haughty Indra; then kill Varuṇa and other Devas and come back to me.'

36-57. Vyāsa said: "The very powerful Asura Vidāla, on receiving the order came up at once to Indra, mounted on a very furious elephant. Seeing him coming, Vāsava shot at him angrily with very terrible and most powerful arrows that looked like deadly snakes. But the Demon cut off those arrows at once with his excellent arrows and quickly shot at Vāsava fifty arrows, sharpened on stones. Indra cut off all those and being infuriated, shot again sharp deadly serpent-like arrows at him, and cutting off again all his enemies' arrows by arrows discharged from his bow, struck the elephant's trunk with his *gadā* (club). The elephant, being thus struck on his head, cried aloud in a distressed tone and being afraid turned back, killing the Dānava forces as he fled away. The general Vidāla, seeing the elephant fleeing away from the battlefield, mounted a beautiful chariot and instantly appeared before the Devas to fight with them. Seeing the Dānava coming again on a chariot, Indra shot sharp arrows after arrows like venomous snakes at him. The powerful Dānava, too, infuriated hurled at him terrible arrows; then a sharp conflict ensued between Vāsava and the Dānava. Finding the Dānava powerful, Vāsava's senses were confounded with anger; he then took his son Jayanta before him and began to fight. Jayanta stretched his bow tight and shot five sharp arrows with his full strength at the breast of the Dānava swelled with pride. Thus shot at by the network of arrows, the Dānava fell unconscious on the chariot; the charioteer then fled away with his chariot from the battlefield.

Thus on the Dānava Vidāla becoming unconscious and being taken away from the field, the *dundubis* (drums) of the Devas resounded and great acclamations of 'Victory to the Devas' were heard. The Devas were very glad and sounded hymns before Indra; the Gandharvas began to sing and the Apsarās began to dance. O king! Hearing the loud acclamations of victory to the Devas, Mahiṣa became very angry and ordered the Dānava Tāmra, the destroyer of enemy's pride, to go to the battlefield. Tāmra

appeared in the battle, and, coming face-to-face with many Deva warriors, hurled on them showers of arrows. Varuṇa appeared with his *pāśa* weapon and Yama, mounted on his buffalo, appeared with his *daṇḍa* (staff). A terrible fight then ensued between the Devas and Dānavas, and the weapons, arrows, axes, *musalas, śaktis* and *paraśus* glittered in the fields. Yama raising his *daṇḍa* with his hands struck at Tāmra; but the powerful Tāmra, though severely struck, was not at all moved and remained firm in his place in the field. On the other hand Tāmra, violently drawing his bow, hurled a mass of sharp arrows at Indra and the other Devas. The Devas got angry and shot at the Dānava multitudes of divine arrows sharpened on stone, and frequently called aloud 'Wait, wait.' The Dānava Tāmra thus shot at by the arrows of the Devas, fell unconscious in the battlefield; the Dānava forces got afraid and a cry of universal consternation and distress arose."

Here ends the Fifth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the defeat of the Dānava forces of Mahiṣa in the MāhāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses.

Chapter VI—the Deva-Dānava fight

1-8. Vyāsa said: "O King! On the Daitya Tāmra becoming unconscious Mahiṣa became very angry and raising his *gadā* (club), came up before the Devas and said: 'Devas! O Ye powerless like crows, wait; with one stroke of this *gadā*, I will kill you.' Thus saying, the powerful Mahiṣa swelled with pride, seeing Indra before him mounted on his elephant instantly struck him on his arms. Indra again lost no time, struck violently with his thunderbolt, cut the Dānava's *gadā* into pieces and came up very close, wanting to strike at him. Mahiṣa, too, becoming very angry took up his lustrous sword and came to Indra to attack him with this weapon. A fight then occurred between the two, terrible to all the *lokas* and wonderful to the Munis, where various weapons were showered from both the sides. The

Demon Mahiṣa spread then his *śāmvarī-māyā*, destructive to all the worlds and fascinating to the Munis.

Hundreds and hundreds of powerful buffalo-like appearances resembling Mahiṣa became visible on the battlefield; they all began to kill the Deva forces with weapons in their hands.

9-14. Seeing this magic of the Dānava, Indra became thunderstruck and very much confounded with terror. Varuṇa, Kuvera the lord of wealth, Yama, Fire, Moon, Sun and other Devas all fled with terror. Indra then, being surrounded by the network of magic, began to call Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa in his mind. At the instant they were called in mind, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa riding on respective conveyances Swan, Garuḍa, and Bull, came up with their best weapons in their hands for Indra's protection. Viṣṇu seeing the play of that fascinating magic hurled his bright discus Sudarśan, and caused the magic to vanish at once. Seeing the three, the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, the Dānava Mahiṣa came up there with his *parigha* (a club tipped with iron) weapon, desirous to fight with them.

15-16. Then the general Ciksura, Ugrāsya, Ugravīrya, Asilomā, Trinetra, Vāskala, Andhaka and other warriors came up to fight.

17-23. Those proud Dānavas, clad in armor and mounted on chariots with bows in their hands besieged the Devas, like a tiger attacking an heifer. Then those Dānavas swelled with pride began to shower arrows after arrows; the Devas, too, began to do the same, desiring to extirpate them. The General Andhaka, coming up to Hari, drew his bow with great force up to his ear and shot at him five sharp arrows tipped with poison. Vāsudeva, the Destroyer of the enemies, cut off those arrows no sooner they came up before him; and He shot at the Dānavas five arrows. Then Hari and the Dānava struck each other with various weapons and arrows, swords, discus, *musala,* clubs, *śakti* and *paraśu*. On the other hand, the fight between Maheśa versus Andhaka lasted for fifty days; and it was a very close conflict, causing horripilation. Thus severe fights ensued between

Vāskala and Indra, Mahiṣa and Rudra, Trinetra and Yama, Mahā Hanu and Kuvera, Asilomā and Varuṇa.

24-39. The Dānava Mahiṣa struck Garuḍa, the conveyance of Hari, with his club; Garuḍa, being very much distressed with the blow, sat down, gasping. Viṣṇu then comforted the powerful Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā and made him calm and quiet. Wanting to kill Andhaka, Janārdana became infuriated, and, drawing his bow made of horn, call *śārnga*, shot at him arrows after arrows. The Dānava cut all those arrows to pieces with his own mass of arrows. Then becoming very angry, he shot fifty sharp arrows at Hari. Vāsudeva quickly made all those arrows useless and hurled the Sudarśana Cakra with a thousand spokes on the Dānava with great violence. Andhaka thwarted this with his own discus and shouted aloud with such a great force that all the Devas became confused and confounded. Viṣṇu's Cakra being baffled, the Devas became distressed with grief and the Dānavas got elated. Seeing the Devas thus grieved, Viṣṇu held aloft his Kaumodakī *gadā* (club) and came hurriedly before the Dānava. Hari struck then with his *gadā* on the Dānava's head, whereon he fell senseless on the ground. The hot-tempered Mahiṣa, seeing Andhaka senseless, bellowed aloud and terrifying Hari, came up there. Seeing him there, Vāsudeva made such a thundering noise with his bow string that the Devas became highly glad. Then the Bhagavān shot showers of arrows on Mahiṣa; and Mahiṣa, too, cut those arrows while they were seen in the air. O king! Then a very close fight ensued between the two, Keśava struck on the head of the Dānava with his club. Thus struck, he fell in a swoon on the ground and a general cry of distress arose amongst the Dānavas. In a moment the Dānava got up again, free from trouble; he then struck again on Viṣṇu's head with his *parigha* (mace). Struck by that mace, Janārdan lay senseless; Garuḍa, seeing Him thus unconscious, immediately took Him away from the battlefield.

40-55. When Viṣṇu thus fled, Indra and the Devas were much distressed with fear and began to cry aloud. Hearing the Devas cry, Śaṅkara became wrathful and quickly coming before Mahiṣa, struck him with His trident

(*śūla*). The wicked Mahiṣa made His weapon ineffectual, bellowed aloud and struck the breast of Śaṅkara with his *śakti* (a kind of missile). Thus wounded in his breast Śaṅkara did not feel any pain; rather, with his eyes red with anger, He struck him again with Trisūla. Seeing Śaṅkara engaged with Mahiṣa, Hari becoming conscious came again on the battlefield. Seeing the two powerful Deva-chiefs, Hari and Hara, in the battlefield Mahiṣa became very much angry: he then assumed a buffalo body and wagging his tail to and fro, came in front of them with a desire to fight. That terrible Mahiṣa of a huge body shook his horns and bellowed so deep like a thunder cloud that even the Devas got frightened. He began to hurl the huge mountain peaks with his two horns. The two powerful Devas Hari and Hara, began to shoot at the Dānava deadly arrows after arrows. Seeing these two gods shower arrows upon him, Mahiṣa began to hurl mountains on them by his tail. Viṣṇu cut those mountains into hundred pieces by his arrows, and struck at him instantly with his Cakra. Struck thus by Cakra, the Lord of the Dānavas fainted, but instantly rose up with a human body. The mountain-like terrible Dānava with a club in his hand frightened the Devas and uttered grave sounds like those of rumbling rain clouds. Hearing that, the Bhagavān Viṣṇu sounded a more terrible sound with his Pañchajanya *śankha* (conchshell). Hearing the sound of that conchshell, the Dānavas were struck with terror, and the ascetic Ṛṣis and Devas became exalted with joy."

Here ends the Sixth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the Deva Dānava fight in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VII—Devas go to Kailāsa

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Mahiṣa seeing the Dānavas afflicted with grief, quit his buffalo appearance, assumed a lion form and spreading this long manes, began to roar aloud and fell amidst the Deva forces; the Devas were terrified on seeing his sharp nails. That lion-form Mahiṣa first attacked so

severely the Garuḍa with his nails, that his whole body was besmeared with blood; then he attacked Viṣṇu's arms with his nails.

4-11. Seeing the Dānava, Vāsudeva Hari raised his discus in anger and attacked him with great force to kill him. Just when Hari struck the Dānava violently with his Cakra, the powerful Dānava immediately quit his lion-form, assumed the buffalo form and struck Hari with his two horns. Vāsudeva, thus pierced in his breast with the horns, became confounded and fled away as best as He could till he reached His own abode, Vaikuṇṭha. Seeing Hari thus fleeing away, Śaṅkara, too, thought him invulnerable and fled to his Kailāśa mountain with fear. Brahmā, too, fled to his own abode with terror; but the powerful Vāsava took patience and remained steady in the battle. Varuṇa taking his *śakti* waited patiently for battle. Yama, too, with his staff remained there ready to fight. Kuvera, the Lord of the Yakṣas, remained very busy in close fighting with the Dānavas; Fire, taking *śakti*, also waited. The Sun and Moon, the Lord of the stars, both remained in firm resolve to fight with Mahiṣa, the lord of the Dānavas.

12-22. O King! In the meanwhile, the Dānava forces got angry and attacked them on all sides, shooting at the enemies a mass of dangerous serpent-like arrows. The Lord of the Dānavas, Mahiṣa, too, assuming the buffalo appearance, reigned supreme in the middle. At this moment fierce sounds of the warriors on both the sides were heard. During the sharp contest of the Devas and Dānavas, the sounds from the bowstrings and clapping of the hands were heard like the roarings of thunder. The powerful Dānava, then, swelled with pride, began to hurl mountaintops with his horns, thus killing the Deva forces. Some by hoofs and some by the lashing of the tail, that angry Mahiṣa, very wonderful to behold, sent to the region of Death. Then the Devas and Gandharvas became very much frightened; so much so that Indra fled away at once on the sight of Mahiṣa. Indra thus retreating from the field, Yama, Kuvera, and Varuṇa all quit the battleground with fear. Indra fled away, quitting his Airāvata elephant and Uccaiśravā horse; so Mahiṣa got the possession of the elephant and the horse, as well the heavenly cow of the Sun. So the Dānavas considered themselves pre-

eminently victorious and returned to their abodes. Next they wanted to go to the Heavens as early as possible, with all their forces. In no time Mahiṣa went to the abode of Indra, deserted by all the terror-stricken Devas and got the possession thereof. Then taking his seat on the beautiful throne of Indra, he made the other Dānavas occupy the several seats of the other Devas.

23-27. Thus fighting full one hundred years, the Dānava Mahiṣa, puffed up with pride, acquired the seat of Indra, his desired object. He banished the Devas from the Heavens; the Devas, thus tormented began to wander in the caves of hills and dales for a period of good many years. O King! The Devas, at last, were quite tired and took the four-faced Brahmā, the Creator's refuge. At that instant, the Lord of the world, the Rājas incarnate, the Originator of the *Vedas*, was seated on His lotus seat; surrounding Him were standing his mortal sons Marīchi, etc., with their passions subdued, mind calm and beyond the sphere of the *Vedas* and *Vedāngas;* there were there also Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Chāranas, Uragas and Pannagas. The terrified Devas then began to praise and chant hymns to Brahmā, the Lord of the world.

28-33. The Devas said: 'O Creator! O Lotus-born! O Thou remover of the pains and afflictions of all this world! How is it that you are not moved with pity towards the Devas, seeing that we are defeated by the lord of the Dānavas and have been banished from our abode; what more shall we say? Our troubles are now indescribable, as we are living in the caves of hills and dales. O Creator! A son may be a hundred times guilty of offence; is it then that the father, devoid of any feeling of covetousness, deserts his sons and gives them trouble? We are oppressed by the Dānavas, we who are wholly devoted to your lotus feet; so why are you today showing signs of indifference towards us! That wicked Dānava is thoroughly enjoying today the Heavens of the Devas, forcibly taking their share of the oblations of clarified butter in the *yajñas* (sacrifices) from the Brāhmaṇas; is enjoying the Pārijāta tree and also the heavenly milch cow, the jewel of the ocean. What more shall we describe to you the strange doings of the Asuras; O Lord of

the Devas? You are perfectly aware of all that they strive and execute; for by your knowledge, you know everything of this world; therefore, O Lord! We lie prostrate at your feet. That vicious Dānava, of wicked character and full of mischievous actions, gives us troubles in various ways wherever we go. O Lord of the Devas! Thou art our only Protector; therefore, O Lord! do what is good to us. Thou art the awarder of the desires of the Devas. Thou art the First Creator of the world, and Preserver; therefore if Thou dost not do us our good, to whom else shall we take refuge, when we are so severely oppressed as if we are burnt in a forest fire? Who else is more lustrous, more beneficent and a more peace-giving Governor?'

34-35. Vyāsa said: "O king! All the Devas, praising Him thus, bowed down to the Lord of creation with folded hands and saluted him, with their faces very heavy, overladen with deep sorrow. The Grandsire of all the *lokas*, seeing the plight of the Devas, consoled them with sweet words and made them happy.

36-43. BrahmāSaid: 'O Suras! What shall I do? The Dānava has become exceedingly haughty on account of his getting boons; he can be killed by females only; He is invulnerable by any male. What remedy is there now? Therefore, O Suras! Let us all go to Kailāsa, the best of all the mountains; thence we will take Śaṅkara, the expert in doing the works of Gods, and go to Vaikuṇṭha, where Viṣṇu, the Deva of the Devas resides. There we all will unite and hold a counsel and decide what is best to do, to serve the purpose of the gods.'

Thus making out the programme, Brahmā riding on his Haṁśa went to Kailāsa, accompanied by all the Devas. At the same time Śiva came to know out of his introspection about the coming of Brahmā and the other Devas and soon came out of his abode. When they met each other, they saluted each other and felt very glad. The Devas then bowed down to Him. Seats were given to the Devas; and when they sat respectively on their *āsanas*, the Lord of Pārvatī also took his own seat. Śiva asked the welfare of Brahmā and the Devas and asked the reasons of their coming to Kailāsa.

44. 'O Brahmā! What has caused you to come here along with Indra and the other Devas? O highly fortunate one! Please mention it.'

45-47. Brahmā said: "O Deva of the Devas! The Dānava Mahiṣa is oppressing all the Devas in the Heavens; they therefore terrified are wandering hither and thither in the caves and hills with Indra. Mahiṣa and the other Dānavas are now accepting their share of *yajñas;* the Lokapālas, being oppressed, have come today and are now taking shelter of Thee. O Śambhu! Considering the situation serious, I have taken them with me here; therefore, O Deva, do that which is reasonable and by which the purpose of the Devas can be carried out. O Bhūta Bhāvana! O creator of the world! The whole charge and responsibility of all the Devas devolves on Thee.'

48. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus, Śaṅkara smiled a little and spoke charming words to the Lotus-born in the following manner:

49-55. 'O Vibhu! It is You that gave before this boon to Mahiṣa; and therefore it is you that have wrought this mischief. The Dānava has become so strong a hero that he has caused terror to all the Devas even. Now where can we get such a noble woman who is able to kill that Dānava, elated with pride. My wife nor your wife ought to go to battle; even if they, the good ladies go, how will they be able to fight? The fortunate wife of Indra, too, is not expert in the art of warfare; where else there is another lady who can kill this demon, blinded with pride? I, therefore, propose this; let us all go today to Viṣṇu and, praising him with hymns, engage him quickly to this cause of the gods. Viṣṇu is foremost amongst the intelligent; therefore it is highly advisable to execute all actions after duly consulting with Him. He, by dint of his high intelligence, will find out means and effect our purpose.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Brahmā and the other Devas heard Rudra, approved heartily and saying, 'Be it so!' instantly rose up. At the time, seeing all the auspicious signs concerning the success of the gods, they all became glad; and riding on their respective vehicles, drove towards the abode of Viṣṇu. Favorable fragrant winds, pleasant to touch, began to blow gently, birds

began to chant hymns of praise and signs of success were seen all along their way. The sky was clear and the quarters became free; in short, everything showed favorable all along their way."

Here ends the Seventh Chapter on the going of the Devas to Kailāsa in the Fifth Skandha of Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter VIII—the Origin and form of the Devī

1-4. Vyāsa said: "Soon the Devas reached Vaikuṇṭha, protected by Viṣṇu; they at once began to look at the exquisite indescribable beauty of the place. At intervals they saw nice lovely divine houses, shining and appearing very splendid; pools and lakes were seen in front of them beautified with Kalahāra lotus flowers. They began to see at other places, rivers flowing; swans, cranes, Cakravākas and other aquatic birds were swimming there easily and warbling lovely sounds. At other places again, beautiful gardens came to their sight adorned exquisitely by Campaka, Aśoka Mandāra, Bakula, *āmrātaka*, Tilaka, Kuruvaka, Mallikā and various other fragrant flower trees, the cuckoos were seen there cooing melodiously, bees humming gently and peacocks dancing beautifully.

5-6. In the center was situated the golden palace of Hari, towering to the heavens. The rooms and quadrangles were all charming; at places, they were bedecked with jewels and adorned with various paintings. There was the Divine Seat in the center, composed wholly of gems and jewels; and Viṣṇu was occupying this place. There were Viṣṇu's *pārisadas* or attendants, Sunanda, Nandana, and others; they were so much devoted to their Master that their hearts never become attached to any other thing; so they were devotedly singing His praises and chanting His hymns with undivided attention.

7-10. There were dancing the Apsarās (celestial nymphs) and the Devas, Gandharvas, and Kinnaras were singing in melodious tunes. Those who

love the chanting of the *Vedas*, such calm-tempered Munis were reciting the Vedic *Sūktas* and highly extolled Him. The two lovely gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya were waiting at the entrance with golden sticks in their hands; the Devas coming nigh the city of Viṣṇu caught sight of them and said: 'You may go and inform Viṣṇu that Brahmā, Rudra and the whole host of gods are waiting at His door to see Him.'

11. Vyāsa said: "O king! Hearing their words, Vijaya went away at once to Viṣṇu; and saluting Him, informed Him of the arrival of the Devas.

12-13. Vijaya said: 'O Lord! Thou destroyest the enemies of the gods; hence Thou art the most worshipped of them. O Lord of Ramā! The whole hosts of gods have come and are waiting at Thy door, O Vibhu! Brahmā, Rudra, Indra, Varuṇa, Fire and Yama and other gods, anxious to see Thee, are all praising Thee by proper hymns.'

14-32. Vyāsa said: "Hearing Vijaya's words, Viṣṇu, the Lord of Ramā became very anxious and soon went out of his room to see the Devas. Hari came up to them and seeing the Devas waiting at the doors very morose and tired, cheered them up by casting a favorable glance full of affection and love. The gods bowed down and praised hymns to Jagannātha the Deva of the Devas, the enemy of the Daityas and revealed in the *Vedas*.

'O Deva of the Devas! Thou art the Creator, Preserver and the Destroyer of the worlds; Thou art the ocean of mercy and the sole refuge of this Universe; O Lord! We have come to Thee as our Great Refuge; therefore dost Thou save us from the present difficulty.'

Thus praised by the gods, Viṣṇu said: 'O Immortals! Take your respective seats and speak. How are you all? Why have you all in a body come here? Why are you so much depressed and worn out with cares? Why do you look so melancholy? Say soon for what purpose you with Brahmā and Rudra have come here.'

The Devas said: 'O Lord! The Asura Mahiṣa is very cruel and wicked, always addicted to vicious acts; now that most sinful Dānava has become very much puffed up with pride and is tormenting us always. What more shall we say than this, he is appropriating to himself the share of the *yajñas* performed by the Brāhmaṇas; we are therefore terror-stricken and are wandering in mountains and fastnesses. O Destroyer of Madhu! He has become unconquerable due to his being granted a boon; considering, therefore, the gravity of our situation we have taken refuge unto Thee. O Kṛṣṇa! Thou art acquainted with all the tricks and Māyā of the Daityas; therefore Thou art capable to kill them. Therefore Thou alone art able to deliver us from the present difficulty; be pleased, therefore; to devise means for that purpose. The Creator Brahmā has granted him this boon that the demon could not killed by any man; therefore we are asking You where we can get a female who will be able to kill that hypocrite in battle. Mahiṣa has turned out very wicked on the strength of that boon; say, therefore, who amongst Umā, Lakṣmī, śachī, or Vidyā or any other woman will be able to kill him. Therefore, O Gracious One to faithful worshippers and attendants! Thou art the Preserver of this world; now devise specially the cause of his death and carry out the purpose of the gods.'

Vyāsa said: "O king! Viṣṇu on hearing their words, spoke smiling 'We fought before; but this Asura could not at that time be killed. Hence if some beautiful female Deity be now created out of the collective energy and form of the *śaktis* of each of the Devas, then that Lady would be able easily to destroy that Demon by sheer force. The Lady Deity sprung from the collective energy of ours, would at once be able to destroy that Mahiṣa, elated on his getting the power, though he is skilled in hundreds of *māyās*. Therefore ask ye now all, with your wives respectively, boons from that portion which resides in you all in the form of Fiery Energy, that the collected energy thus manifested may assume the form of a Lady. We will then offer unto Her all the Divine weapons, the trident, etc., that belong to us. That Deity, then, full of energy and with all the weapons in Her hands would kill that wicked Demon, vicious and swelled with vanity.'

33-46. Vyāsa said: "On Viṣṇu, the Lord of the Devas, saying thus, came out spontaneously, from the face of Brahmā, the brilliant fiery energy, very difficult to conceive. That energy looked red like gems and pearls, hot, at the same time, a little cool, having a beautiful form, and encircled by a halo of light. O King! The high-souled Hari and Hara, of mighty valor, were astonished to see this Fire, emitted from Brahmā. Next came out of the body of Śaṅkara His fiery spirit, quite in abundance and very wonderful to behold; it was silvery white, terrible, unbearable, and incapable of being seen even with difficulty. It extended like a mountain and looked horrible, as if the incarnation of the *tamo-guṇa* became another *tamo-guṇa*. It was very surpṛṣing to the Devas and very fearful to the Daityas. Next a dazzling light of blue color emanated from the body of Viṣṇu. The light that came out of the body of Indra was hardly bearable, of a beautiful variegated color, and comprised in itself the three qualities. Thus masses of lights came out respectively from Kuvera, Yama, Fire and Varuṇa. The other Devas, too, gave their shares of fiery lights, very lustrous and splendid. Then these all united into a great mass of Fire and Light. Like another Himalayan mountain shone full their lustrous Divine light; Viṣṇu and the other Devas were all extremely surprised to see this. While the Devas were thus looking steadfastly on that Fire, an exquisitely handsome Lady was born out of it, causing excitement and wonder to all. This Lady was Mahā-Lakṣmī; composed of the three qualities of the three colors, beautiful, and fascinating to the universe. Her face was white, eyes were black, her lips were red and the palms of her hands were copper-red. She was adorned with divine ornaments. The Goddess was now manifest with eighteen hands, though She had a thousand hands in Her unmanifested state. Now She became manifest out of the mass of fire, for the destruction of the Asuras."

47-52. Janamejaya said: "O Best of the Munis! O Kṛṣṇa! You are highly fortunate and you are all-knowing. Kindly describe, in detail the birth of Her body. O Deva! Please say whether the energies of all the gods united into one or remained separate? Whether Her body and Her limbs were all luminous? Was it that Her face, nose, eyes, etc., and all other parts of Her

body were created out of the different fires respectively, or was it that those limbs were fashioned when the different fires blended into one huge mass? Describe, in detail, the origin of the body and the several limbs thereof; also inform me the limbs that were produced out of the corresponding Devas' fiery part; also tell me the several ornaments and several weapons given by the several Devas respectively. I am very desirous to hear all these from your lotus-like mouth. O Brāhmaṇa! Hearing from your lotus-like mouth the life and doings of Mahā-Lakṣmī, the sweet juice as they are, I am as yet not satiated and am desirous to hear more."

53. Sūta said: "Vedavyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, hearing his words addressed him in the following sweet words:

54. "O Best of Kurus! Very fortunate you are. I will describe in detail, to the best of my understanding, the origin of Her body.

55. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa and Indra are not competent to describe Her form properly.

56. As I already told you, She sprung into being at the instant the word was spoken; how then can I ascertain the form or likeness of the Devī.

57. She is constant, She is always existent; though She is one, yet She assumes different forms for the fulfilment of the Devas' ends, whenever their positions become serious.

58-59. Though the actor is one, yet for the entertainment of the spectators, he assumes different forms in the stage, so the Nirgunā-Devī, though formless, assumes in Her pastime many different forms of *sāttvik, rājasik* or *tāmasik* qualities, to fulfill the Devas' purposes.

60. There are various names given to Her according as the works done by Her vary immensely in their nature, just as the meanings of one root vary, some being principal and some secondary, according to the meanings and objects they convey.

61. O King! I will now describe to you as far as my knowledge goes, the Excellent Form that came out of that mass of Celestial Light.

62. Her grand beautiful white lotus-like face was created out of the fiery energy of Śaṅkara.

63. Her glossy black beautiful hair of the head, overhanging to the knees, were formed out of the light of Yama; these all came to a fine pointed end.

64. Her three eyes came out of the energy of Fire; the pupils of those eyes were of a black color; the middle parts were of a white color and the ends were red.

65. The two eyebrows of the Devī were black and came out of the spirit of Sandhyā (twilights); they were nicely curved and were looking spirited, like the bow of the Cupid and they were shedding, as it were, cooling rays.

66. From the light of Vāyu (air), Her two ears were created; they were not very long nor very short, beautiful like the swinging seat (rocking chair) of the God of Love.

67. Her nose was fashioned out of the fire of Kuvera, the Lord of wealth; it looked like the *til* (sesame) flower, glassy and exquisitely charming.

68. O King! Her pointed rows of glossy and brilliant teeth, looking like gems, came out of the energy of Dakṣa; they looked like the Kunda flowers.

69. Her lower lip was deep red and it came out of the fire of Aruna (the charioteer of the Sun); Her beautiful upper lip came out of the energy of Kārtika.

70. Her eighteen hands came out of the *tejas* of Viṣṇu and Her red fingers came out of the *tejas* of the Vasus.

71. Her breasts came out of the energy of Soma and Her middle (navel) with three folds was created out of the spirit of Indra.

72. Her thighs and legs were from Varuṇa and Her spacious loins came out from Earth.

73-74. O King! Thus from the various *tejas* contributed by the Devas, that Heavenly Lady came out. Her body and the several parts thereof were beautiful; Her form was incomparably graceful and the voice was exquisitely sonorous and lovely. The Devas, oppressed by Mahiṣāsura, became overpowered with joy seeing this well decorated Devī, having beautiful eyes and teeth, and charming in all respects.

75. Viṣṇu then addressed all the Devas to give all their auspicious ornaments and weapons, He said: 'O Devas! All of you better take the various arms and weapons, endowed with strength, created out of your own weapons and give them all today to the Devī.'

Here ends the Eighth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the description of the origin and the form of the Devī in śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter IX—Worship of the Devī by the Gods

1-22. Vyāsa said: "On hearing Viṣṇu's words, the Devas became very glad and presented immediately their own weapons, ornaments and clothing. The Kṣiroda (Milk) Ocean gladly presented to Her a well-fitted necklace, clear as crystal, and a pair of divine cloths of red color, never becoming old and very fine. Viśvakarmā, very much gratified in his heart, presented a divine jewel to be worn in Her diadem or crest blazing like hundreds of suns; white earrings; bracelets for Her wrist and upper arm, other bracelets decked with various gems and jewels, and anklets brilliant like gems, of a clear Sun-like luster, decked with jewels, and tinkling nicely. The architect of the gods, the ocean of intellect, Viśvakarmā gave Her as offerings beautiful ornaments also for the neck, all very beautiful, as well as for the fingers decked with gems and jewels, all shining splendidly. Varuṇa gave for Her head a garland of never-fading lotuses, of such a sweet fragrance as

bees constantly hover round them, and a Vaijayantī garland for Her breast. The mountain Himālaya gladly offered Her various gems and a beautiful Lion of a golden color for Her conveyance. Then that beautiful Lady having all auspicious signs, wishing welfare to all and decorated with the divine ornaments began to look grandly splendid, mounted on Her conveyance the Lion. Viṣṇu then created another thousand-spoked discus (*cakra*) from His own *cakra*, capable to take off the head of any Asura, and offered it to Her. Śaṅkara created another excellent Triśūla from his own trident, terrible and demon-killing, and offered it to the Devī. Varuṇa created another bright conch from his own conch and gladly offered it to the Devī. Fire offered Her a weapon named *śataghni* which violently kills the demons, as if another god of death. Maruta (wind), the chief of the gods, offered Her a wonderful bow and an arrow case filled with arrows. The bow can be drawn with great difficulty and emits a very harsh sound. Indra created another dreadful thunderbolt from his own thunderbolt and gave it at once to the Devī; as well the beautiful sonorous bell that used to hang from the elephant Airāvata. Yama the God of Death, created another beautiful staff from his own sceptre which takes away the life of all beings when their time comes. Brahmā gladly gave Her a divine Kamaṇḍalu, filled with Ganges water; and Varuṇa offered Her a weapon called *pāśa*. O King! Time gave Her an axe and a shield, and Viśvakarmā gave Her a sharp *paraśu*. Kuvera, the Lord of wealth, gave her a golden drinking cup filled with wine; and Vāruna offered Her a divine beautiful lotus. Viśvakarmā became very glad and gave Her the Kaumodakī-gadā, capable to kill the enemy of the gods, whence hundreds of bells are hanging, an impenetrable armor and various other weapons. The Sun gave to the Divine Mother his own rays. The Devas, seeing Her adorned with ornaments and weapons, began to praise and chant hymns to that most Auspicious Goddess, the Great Enchantress of the three worlds.

23-29. The Devas said: ‘Salutation to Śivā, salutation to the most auspicious! Thou art peace and nourishment; we salute Thee again and again. Salutation to Thee, the Devī Bhagavatī; Thou art the Goddess Rudrāṇī (the terrible), we always salute again and again to Thee. Thou art the Kālarātrī,

the night of destruction at the end of the world; Thou art the Indrāṇī. Thou art the Mother, we salute again and again to Thee; Thou art success, Thou art intelligence, Thou art growth, Thou art the Vaisnavī; salutation again and again to Thee. Thou art within the earth; yet the earth does not know Thee. Thou art again the inmost of the earth and controllest the things within this earth; we offer our salutations to that Supreme Cause, the Highest Goddess. Thou art within this Māyā, yet the Māyā does not know Thee. Thou residest again within the innermost of the Māyā and directest that Unborn One. We salute again and again to that Supreme Cause, the Great Directress, the Śivā (the most auspicious). O Mother! Do what is good to us; we are oppressed by our enemy, do then protect us; by Thy own power do Thou overpower and kill that Mahiṣa. That demon is vulnerable by woman only. He is deceitful, cunning, dreadful, and swollen with pride on his having got the blessing; he assumes many forms and torments the Devas. O Thou, devoted to the Bhaktas! Thou art the only refuge of all the gods; O Thou art the Supreme Goddess, we are very much harassed and oppressed by the Dānava; therefore dost Thou now protect us; we bow down to Thee.'

30. Vyāsa said: "When the Devas had praised thus the Highest Goddess, the giver of all happiness, then She smilingly said in the following auspicious words:

31. 'O Devas! Today in the battleground I will overpower that wicked Mahiṣa, of cruel disposition and take away his life.'

32-40. Vyāsa said: "Speaking thus in a melodious voice, the Supreme One smiled and again said: 'This world is all full of error and delusion. Really, it is very wonderful that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra and other gods are all shuddering out of fear from Mahiṣa Dānava. The power of Destiny is exceedingly great and terrible; its influence cannot be overcome even by the best of the Devas.'

O king! Time is the Lord of happiness and pain; Time is, therefore, God. The wonder is this that even those who can create, preserve and destroy this world, they are being overpowered and tormented by Mahiṣa.'

The Devī, thinking thus, smiled; then laughed and laughed very hoarsely; it seemed that a roar of laughter then arose. And the Dānavas were struck with terror at that very dreadful sound. The earth trembled at that extraordinary sound; the mountains began to move and the vast oceans that remained calm began to be agitated with billows. The uproar filled all the quarters and the mountain Meru trembled. Then the Dānavas, hearing the tumultuous uproar, were all filled with tremendous fear. The Devas became very glad and said thus: 'O Devī! Let victory be Yours; save us.' The intoxicated Mahiṣa, too, hearing those words, became very angry. Mahiṣa, struck with terror at those words, asked the Daityas 'O Messengers! Go and ascertain how has originated this sound.

41-48. Who has made this harsh sound? Bring that devil who has made this hoarse noise, be he a Deva, Dānava, or anyone else unto me, and I will kill that roaring villain who, it seems, has been puffed with egoism and vanity. The Devas are not making this noise, for they are vanquished and terror-stricken; the Asuras are not doing so, for they are my subjects; then, who is the stupid fellow that has done so? Surely he is of very little understanding; his days are numbered; and I will carry him to the home of Death. Go you, ascertain the cause of sound and come back to me; then I will go there and destroy that wretch who made this noise to no purpose.'

Vyāsa said: "No sooner the messengers heard these words of Mahiṣa, than they at once went to the Devī and saw that Her body and the several parts thereof were all very beautiful; She had eighteen hands, She was decorated completely with various ornaments all over Her body, all the auspicious signs were being seen in Her body and that She was holding excellent divine weapons. That auspicious beautiful Goddess was holding the cup in Her hands and drinking wine again and again. Beholding Her form, they

were afraid and fled at once to the Mahiṣa and informed him the cause of that sound.

49-54. The Daityas said: 'O Lord! We have seen one grown-up woman; of whose origin we are quite ignorant. The Devī is decorated with jewels and ornaments all over Her body; She is not human nor Asurī, but Her form is extraordinary and beautiful. That noble Lady is mounted on a Lion, holding weapons on all Her eighteen hands and is roaring loudly; She is drinking wine; so it seems that She is puffed up with liquor. It is quite certain that She has no husband. The Devas are gladly chanting praises from the celestial space that "Let victory be to Her side" and that "May She save the Devas." O Lord! We don't know at all who is that handsome woman, whose wife is she, or why she has come there, and what is Her motive. Sentiments of love, heroism, laughter, terror and wonder are all fully shining in Her; therefore we are very much overpowered by the halo emitted from Her; and we could not even see Her well.

55. O King! In compliance with your order, we have come back to you no sooner we had seen the Lady, without even addressing Her in any way. Now order us what we are to do.'

56-58. Mahiṣa said: 'O Best of ministers! O Hero! Under my command, go there with all the forces and use the means, conciliation, etc., and bring that woman, having a beautiful moonlike face to me. If that Lady does not come even when the three policies (the *upāyas* or means of success against an enemy)—*sāma* (conciliation), *dāna* (making gifts) and *bheda* (sowing dissensions in an enemy's party and thus winning him over to one's side)—are adopted by you, then apply the last resort *daṇḍa* (or war) in such a way that Her life be not destroyed, and bring that beautiful woman to me. I will gladly make Her, of black curling hairs, my queen-consort. In case that deer-eyed one comes gladly, then do my desires without causing any unpleasant feeling. I am enchanted on hearing about Her beauties and wealth.'

59-67. Vyāsa said: "The prime minister, on hearing the words of Mahiṣa, took with him elephants, horses, and chariots and hurriedly went to the desired place. On coming near to the Devī, the minister began to address Her in sweet words from a sufficient distance in a very humble and courteous way: 'O Sweet-speaking woman! Who art Thou? What has caused Thee to come here? O Highly fortunate One! My master has asked through me these questions. My master cannot be killed by all the Devas and men; he has conquered all the *lokas* (worlds). O Beautiful-eyed! On account of getting his boon from Brahmā, the Lord of the Daityas has become very powerful and consequently being very proud, assumes different forms at will. He, our King-Emperor Mahiṣa, the lord of the earth, hearing about Thy beauty and dress, has expressed a desire to see Thee. O Beautiful one! Shall he appear before Thee in a human form? He will do whatever Thou likest. O Deer-eyed One! Be pleased now to go to that intelligent King. In case Thou dost not go, we will bring the King, Thy devotee, to Thee. O Lord of the Devas! Our King has heard of Thy beauty and grandeur and has become very much submissive to Thee. We will therefore do exactly what Thou desirest. Therefore, Thou having thighs thick and round like those of a young of an elephant! Be pleased to express what Thou likest and we will do quickly as Thou desirest.'

Here ends the Ninth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the worship offered by the gods to the Devī and the weapons offered by them in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhagāvatam, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter X—the Messenger's news to Mahiṣa

1-16. Vyāsa said: "The Mahā-Māyā, that Excellent Lady, hearing thus the words of the prime minister of Mahiṣa, laughed and spoke with a voice deep like that of a cloud, thus: 'O Minister-in-chief! Know Me as the Mother of the gods; my name is Mahā-Lakṣmī. It is I that destroy all the Daityas. I am requested by all the Devas to kill Dānava Mahiṣa; they have been oppressed and deprived of their share of *yajña* offerings. Therefore I

have come here today alone, without any army to take away his life. O good one! I am pleased with your sweet words of welcome, in showing me marks of respect. Had you not behaved thus, I would have certainly burnt you to ashes by my fiery sight, which is the universal conflagration at the breakup of the world. O Minister! Who is there that gets not pleased with sweet words! Go you to Mahiṣa and speak to him the following words of mine "O Villain! Go down to Pātāla (the nether regions) at once if you have any desire to live. Otherwise, I will slay you, the wicked one, in the battlefield; you will have to go to the house of Death, pierced by my mass of arrows. O stupid one! Know that this is merely kindness shown unto you, that I have told you to go soon to Pātāla and that the Devas get possession of their Heaven, with no delay. O one of weak intellect! Therefore dost thou leave possession of this sea-girt earth and go alone without any delay to Pātāla, before my arrows are shot at you. O Asura! Or if you desire to fight, then come at once with your powerful warriors; I will destroy all of them. O one of dull intellect! I will kill you in battle, just as I killed before in *yugas* after *yugas* countless Asuras like you. O passionate creature! Better show that your efforts in holding weapons have been crowned with success by your being engaged in battle against Me; otherwise they will all be useless. O stupid! You thought that you would be vulnerable alone to women, hence you oppressed the Devas entitled to worship; O wicked one! No longer show your pride on the strength of your getting the boon from Brahmā, that you would be vulnerable only to the females. Thinking it advisable to observe the words of the Creator, I have assumed this incomparable Eternal Female appearance and I have come here to slay you, O wicked one! O stupid one! If you have any desire for your life, then quit this Heaven and go to Pātāla, infested with snakes, or anywhere else you like."

17-28. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of the Devī, that minister, surrounded by forces, replied in reasonable words thus: 'O Devī! You are speaking in words befitting a woman and puffed up with pride. You are a woman; the lord of the Daityas is a hero; how can a battle be engaged between you two? It seems to me impossible. Your body is delicate, a girl in

full youth; especially you are alone and Mahiṣa is of huge body and powerful; so the fight comes next to impossibility. He has elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, etc., and countless soldiers all armed with weapons. Therefore, O Beautiful One! He will find no difficulty in killing you in battle as an elephant finds no difficulty in treading over the Mālati flowers. Rather, if I utter anything harsh to you, that would go against the sentiment of love with you; therefore I cannot speak rudely to you out of my fear of interrupting the above feeling. True, that our king is an enemy of the gods; but be has become extremely devoted to You. Therefore it is wise to speak words full of conciliation or generosity. Were it otherwise, I would have shot arrows at You and killed You, inasmuch as You have thus boasted in vain and spoken so dire a falsehood, resting merely on the strength of your youthful pride and cleverness. My master has become fascinated on hearing of your extraordinary beauty hardly to be seen in this world; it therefore behoves me to speak sweet words to you for the sake of pleasing my master. O Large-eyed! This kingdom and the wealth thereof are all yours; in fact, Mahiṣa will be your obedient servant; therefore, better forsake your anger, leading to your death, and cultivate friendship with him. O Sweet Smiling One! I am falling at your feet; you better go to him and become at once the queen-consort. O Handsome Woman! No sooner you become the queen of Mahiṣa than you will get at once all the pure wealth of the three worlds and the unbounding happiness of this world.'

29-45. The Devī said: 'Minister! I now speak what is pregnant with goodness and wisdom to you, according to the rules of the *śāstras*, keeping in view also the cleverness that you have shown in using your words. Now I come to understand from your talk, that you are the chief secretary of Mahiṣa; and therefore your nature and intelligence are like those of a beast. And how can he be intelligent, whose ministership is occupied by a man of your nature! Nature has ordained connection between two persons of like nature. O stupid one! Did you think a little beforehand the meaning of your words when you told me of my feminine nature? Though I am not apparently a man, yet my nature is that of the Highest Puruṣa; I show myself simply in a feminine form. Your master asked before from Brahmā

that he would prefer death, if possible, at the hands of a woman; therefore, I consider him quite illiterate and ignorant of the sentiment worthy of a hero. Because to die at the hands of a woman is very painful to one who is a hero; and this is gladly welcome to one who is a hermaphrodite. Now see that your master Mahiṣa has shown his faulty intelligence when he courted his death from the hands of a woman. For that very reason, I have come here in the shape of a woman to effect my purpose; why shall I fear, then, to hear your words, contradictory to those of the *śāstras*. When Fate goes against anyone, a blade of grass comes like a thunderbolt; and when fate goes in favor of anyone, a thunderbolt becomes as soft as a bundle of cotton. What does it avail even when one possesses an extensive army or various weapons in abundance, taking shelter in a widely extending fort? What will his soldiers do for him, whose death has come close at hand? Whenever the connection of the *jīva* with this body is brought about, then his pleasures, pains and death are written. Know this as certain, very certain, that death will come to him in the manner as written by the hands of Fate; it will never be otherwise. As the birth and death of Brahmā and other gods are ordained, your death has been similarly ordained; there is no need of taking the example further than this. Those who are tied up by the hands of death are surely fools and of extremely blunt intellect, if they think simply on the strength of their getting some boon 'that I would never die.' Fools! Therefore go quickly to your king and speak to him what I have said; you will then surely obey what he commands you to do. If he wants his life, he, with his retinue, would at once go down to Pātāla; let Indra and the other Devas get possession of the Heavens and their share of *yajñas*. If he holds a contrary opinion, let him be eager to go to the house of Death and come and fight with Me. If he thinks that Viṣṇu and the other Devas have fled from the battlefield, he has nothing to boast of; for he has not shown his manliness at all even then; for his victory is solely due to his having got the boon from Brahmā.'

46-52. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of the Devī, the Dānava began to think, 'Should I fight or to go to Mahiṣa? The King has become very enamored and has sent me hither to negotiate for marriage; how then will I

be able to go to him if I make this affair unpleasant and interrupted in the middle in its course of harmony? Now it is wise for me to go to the King without fighting; let me then go as early as possible in this way and inform him about this whole affair. The King is exceptionally intelligent and experienced; he will consult with his other experienced ministers and do what is best. Therefore I ought not to fight here rashly; for victory or defeat would alike be distasteful to my monarch. Whether this Lady kills me, or I kill this Lady, the king will be angry in either case. I will therefore go now to the king and tell him what the Devī has said; he will do whatever he likes.'

53-66. Vyāsa said: "Thus that intelligent son of the minister argued and went to the king. Then, bowing down before him, he began to say thus: 'O King! That excellent woman, fascinating to the world, the beautiful Devī is sitting on a Lion with weapons in all her eighteen hands. O King! I told her "O Beautiful Lady! Be attached to Mahiṣāsura; you will become, then, the queen-consort of the king, the lord of the three worlds. You will certainly then be his queen-consort; he will pass his life, ever submissive to you like an obedient servant. O Beautiful One! If you choose to make Mahiṣa your husband, you will become fortunate amongst women and will enjoy ever all the wealth of the three worlds." Hearing my these words, that large-eyed woman, puffed up with egoism, laughed a little and said thus: "Your king is born of a buffalo and is the worst of brutes; I will sacrifice him before the Devī for the benefit of the gods. Is there any woman in this world so stupid as to select Mahiṣa as her husband? O you stupid! Can a woman like me ever indulge in bestial sentiments? A female buffalo has got horns; she, being excited with passion, may select your Mahiṣa with horns as her husband come to him bellowing. I am not stupid nor like her so as to make him my husband. O villain! I will fight and destroy the enemies of the gods in the battlefield. Or if he desires to live, let him flee to Pātāla." O King! Hearing those rough words uttered by Her in a moment of madness, I have come to you, thinking also how to redress this wrong. O King! Only I feared not to interrupt in your love sentiment; and therefore I did not fight with Her; especially, without Your command, how can I engage

myself in useless excitement? O Lord of the Earth! That handsome woman rests maddened on Her own strength; I do not know what is in the womb of future or whatever is destined to happen, will surely come to pass. You are the sole master in this matter; I will do whatever you order me. The matter is very difficult to be reflected upon; whether it is better to fight or it is better to fly away, I cannot say definitely."

Here ends the Tenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the messenger's news to Mahiṣa, in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XI—the Dānava Tāmra before the Devī

1-3. Vyāsa said: "The King Mahiṣāsura, maddened with pride, heard the messenger's words, called the aged and experienced ministers and said thus: 'O Ministers! What am I to do now? Better judge you all well, and speak out definitely to me. Is it that this Devī has been created by the Devas like the Māyā of Sambarāsura and thus has appeared before us? You are all dexterous and know where to apply the four means of success, viz., conciliation, gift or bribery, sowing dissensions and war; and therefore you would better tell me which one of the above four I am to adopt now.'

4-7. The ministers said: 'O King! One should always speak true and at the same time pleasant; the wise ones should then select only those which are beneficial and apply them. O King! As a medicine, though bitter, cures diseases, so true words, though appearing unpleasant, lead to beneficial results. Those that are simply pleasant, are generally injurious as to their effects. O Lord of the Earth! The bearers and approvers of truth both are very rare; truth speakers also are very difficult to be seen; laudatory sycophancy is found in a great measure in this world. O King! Nobody in the three worlds knows what will be good or what will lead to inauspicious results. How can we then definitely pronounce our judgment in this difficult matter?'

8-9. The King said: 'Let each of you say separately, according to his own intellect, what is his opinion; I will hear them all and consider for myself. Clever persons should hear the opinions of several persons, then judge for himself what is the best and then adopt that as what is to be done.'

10. Vyāsa said: "Hearing his words, the powerful Virūpāksa came out foremost of all and began to say pleasant words to the King.

11-16. 'O King! Please take for certain that what has been spoken by that ordinary woman, swelled with vanity, as words simply to scare you. The efforts and courage of a woman are known to all; who will be afraid therefore, to hear abusive language from a woman, praising her own self in matters of warfare? O King! You have conquered the three worlds by your own heroic valor; now if you acknowledge your inferiority out of fear of a woman, you would be subject to very much disgrace in this world. Therefore, O King! I will go alone to fight with Caṇḍīkā and kill Her. You can stay here now without any fear. O King! See my prowess now; I am just now going with my army and I will kill that violent Caṇḍīkā, maddened with pride, or I will tie Her down by a coil of snakes and bring Her before you; then that Lady, seeing Herself helpless, will become quite submissive to you; there is no doubt about this.'

17-30. Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of Virūpāksa, Durdhara said: 'O King! Virūpāksa is very intelligent; what he has said just now is all reasonable and true. O King! You are intelligent; hear my words full of truth also. As far as I think, I consider that woman with beautiful teeth as passionate. For that woman of broad hips has expressed a desire to bring you under control by making you fearful; the mistresses, proud of their beauty generally use such words when they become passionate. When they behave in this way, people call these amorous gestures. These crooked words of mistresses are the chief causes in attracting dear persons unto them. Those who are skilled in the art of love affair, some of them can know these things thoroughly well. O King! That woman has said, "I will pierce and kill you by arrows, face-to-face, in the battlefield." The sense of

this is different. The wise persons that are clever and experienced in the art of finding out the cause, declare that the above sentence is pregnant with deep and esoteric meaning. You can easily see that the handsome women have no other arrows with them; their side-glances are their arrows. And their words carry their hidden meanings, and expressing their desires, are their flowers. O King! Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa even have no powers to shoot arrows at you; then, how can that helpless woman, who appears so passionate, dart real arrows at you? O King! That lady said: "O Stupid! I will kill your King by my arrowlike eyesight." But the messenger was wanting in that power to appreciate; so he, no doubt, understood her words in their contrary sense. The saying of that lady, "I will lay your lord in the death-bed in the battlefield" is to be taken in the light of inverted sexual intercourse, where woman is above the man. Her utterance, "I will take away the vital life of your lord" is also significant. The virile semen is known as the vitality. Therefore the above expression means that she will make you devoid of your virility. There can be no other meaning. O King! Those women that are excellent show by too much of their covert expressions and innuendos that they select and like very much their beloved. The experts only in these amorous affairs will be able to appreciate these things. Knowing thus, dealings ought to be made with Her so that the harmony in amorous sentiments be not broken. O King! *Sāma* (conciliation) and *dāna* (gifts) are the two means to be adopted; there is no other way. By these two, that Lady, whether she be proud or angry, is sure to have brought under control; I will go now and bring Her before you by such sweet words. O King! What is the use of my talking too much? I will make Her submissive to you like a slave girl.'

31-44. Vyāsa said: "Hearing those words of Durdhara, the Dānava Tāmra, who was very experienced in finding out the real nature, said: 'I am telling you what is sanctioned by virtue and is at the same time full of sweet amorous feelings, pregnant with deep meanings. Kindly hear; O giver of honor! This intelligent woman is not at all passionate nor devoted to you; nor has that woman used any covert expressions to you. O Great Hero! This is strange indeed that a Lady, beautiful, handsome, and of strange

features, at the same time alone and helpless, has come here to fight. A good-looking woman, powerful, and having eighteen hands is never heard of, nor ever seen by me in these three worlds. She is holding in each of Her hands powerful weapons. O king! All these seem to be the contrary actions of Time. O King! I saw ominous dreams during the night; and I conclude, therefore, that great dangers are over our heads. Early in the morning twilight, I saw in my dream that a woman, wearing a black raiment, was weeping in the inner courtyard; that some inauspicious events are forthcoming can be easily judged from the above. O King! The birds were screaming hoarsely in every house and various calamitous events were seen in various houses; at this time that woman, firmly resolved, was challenging you to fight; it, therefore seems to me that there is something very serious in this matter. O Lord! This woman is neither human, nor a Gandharvī, nor the wife of any Asura. Only to cause delusion to us, she, this wondrous Māyā has been created by the gods. O King! In no case, weakness is to be resorted; it is wise by all means to fight as best as possible; what is inevitable will come to pass; this is my opinion. No one is able to unriddle the words and actions of the Devas, whether they would be auspicious or inauspicious. Therefore intelligent ones should weigh pros and cons carefully and remain patient and steady. O King! Life or death is at the hands of Destiny; Nobody, therefore, can do it otherwise.'

45-51. Hearing this, Mahiṣāsura said: 'O Highly fortunate Tāmra! Better then stand for fight, fully resolved and go to that beautiful Lady, conquer Her according to rules of justice, and bring Her before me. In case She does not come under your control in fight, kill Her; but if She comes round, then show Her honor; do not kill Her. O All-knowing! You are a great hero and at the same thoroughly conversant with *kāma-śāstra* (science of love); therefore conquer that Fair One by any means you can. O valiant Tāmra, of mighty prowess! Go then with a mighty force and ponder over again and again and find out Her intention. Is She prompted by passion, by real inimical feeling or by any other motive? Try to find out whose *māyā* is this? Know all these beforehand; then find out the remedy; next fight with Her according to your strength and prowess. Weakness should not be shown

nor merciless behavior is to be resorted; you should behave with Her according to the bent of Her mind.'

52. Vyāsa said: "O king! Thus hearing the King's words, Tāmra as if under the sway of Death, saluted the king Mahiṣa and marched away with his army.

53-66. That wicked Dānava, who, on his way, began to see all the fearful inauspicious signs indicative of Death, became surprised and was caught with fear. When he arrived at the spot, he saw the Devī seated on a Lion, while She was decorated with all the weapons and instruments, and all the Devas were chanting hymns to Her. Tāmra then bowed down before Her with humility and modesty, and addressed Her with sweet words, according to the rules of the policy of conciliation. 'O Devī! Mahiṣa, the lord of the Daityas, has become enchanted on hearing Your beauty and qualifications and has become desirous to marry You. O Beautiful One! You would better be graciously pleased with that conqueror of the Immortals, the Mahiṣāsura; O Thou of delicate limbs! Make him Your husband enjoy all the exquisite pleasures of the Nandana garden as best You can. The end and aim of attaining this human form, beautiful in every respect and the abode of all bliss, is to enjoy in every way all the pleasures of human existence and to avoid the sources of all troubles. This is the rule.

'O Thou of beautiful thighs like those of a young elephant! Your soft and delicate lotus-like hands are fit to play only with nice balls of flowers; why then are You holding in Your hands all the weapons and arrows? What is the use of holding ordinary arrows, when those two eyebrows like bows, are existing with You? What need have you to take ordinary arrows when you are graced with those piercing glances, your arrows. War is exceedingly painful in this world; those who know thus ought never to fight. It is only those human beings that are prompted by greed that fight with each other. What to speak of those sharpened arrows, one ought not to fight with flowers even; O Devī! You can well say, who is it that feels pleasure, when one's own body is pierced? Therefore, O Delicate One!

Gladly you can worship Mahiṣa, the lord of the world and the object of worship of the Devas and Dānavas. Then he will satisfy all your desires. What more to say, you will no doubt be his queen-consort. O Devī! If one tries one's best, it is doubtful whether one would be crowned with success; therefore keep my this request; you will surely get all the best pleasures. O Beautiful! You are well acquainted with all the politics; therefore You better enjoy thoroughly the pleasures of the kingdom for full many years. And if You marry Mahiṣa You will have beautiful sons, and those sons again will be kings; and enjoying the pleasures of your full-grown womanhood, you will no doubt be happy in Your old age.'

Here ends the Eleventh Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the appearing of the Dānava Tāmra before the Devī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XII—Mahiṣāsura holds Counsel

1. Vyāsa said: "The World-Mother, hearing Tāmra's words, spoke laughing a little and with a deep voice like that of a rumbling thunder cloud.

2-13. The Devī spoke: 'O Tāmra! Go and say to your Lord Mahiṣa who, it seems, is stupid, whose end is nigh, who has become very passionate, and who is void of knowledge what is proper and what is improper. I am not like your grown-up mother, the she-buffalo, having horns, eating grass, with a long tail and a big belly. I do not like to have Viṣṇu, the god Śaṅkara, Brahmā, Kuvera, Varuṇa, or Fire. How then can I select a beast? If I do so, I will be an object of much censure amongst the several worlds. I am not desirous of any more husband; my Husband is existing; though He is the Lord of all, Witness of All, yet He is not the Actor; He is without any desires and He is calm and tranquil. He, Śiva, is devoid of any *prakṛtik* qualities, without any attachment, the Great Infinite, without anyone to rely on, without any refuge, omniscient, omnipresent, the Great Witness, the Full, and the seat of the Full, the Auspicious. He is the abode of all, capable to do all, the peaceful, capable to create everything and He is

seeing everywhere. How can I then leave Him and try to serve the dull, stupid Mahiṣa? Let him come and fight with this understanding that he will be defeated and be made the conveyance of Yama, the God of Death or the carrier of water of the human beings. And if that impious heretic desires to live, let him fly at once to Pātāla with all his demon comrades; else I will slay him in battle. See! The combination of similar substances leads to happiness; and if out of ignorance, the connection takes place between things entirely different in their natures, it becomes at once the source of all pains and troubles. You are a thorough illiterate when you ask me to worship your lord; do you not see me endowed with exquisite beauty? and what is your Mahiṣa? A buffalo with horns; how can then creation become possible between us? Better fly away or fight if you like; I will kill you and your friends, and if you leave the region of Heavens and the share of Yajñā, then you will become happy.'

14-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying, the Devī howled and roared so loudly that it appeared strange and it caused a great terror to the Dānavas who took it as the great dissolution of the universe at the end of a Kalpa. The earth and the mountains trembled; the wives of the Dānavas had miscarriages at that terrific noise. Tāmra hearing that sound was terrified; his mind became unsteady and he at once fled to Mahiṣa. O King! The Dānavas present in the city became deaf; they fled and became very anxious, and were absorbed in the thought whence and how that sound came. The Lion, too, enraged and, raising up its manes, roared so loud that the Daityas became very much terrified. Mahiṣa, too, became confounded to see Tāmra returning; he then held a council with his ministers what ought to be done next.

Mahiṣāsura said: 'O best of the Dānavas! Shall we now take our shelter within the forts? Or shall we go out and fight? Or will it be favorable to us if we fly away? You all are intelligent, versed in all the *śāstras* and unconquerable by your foes; therefore ought you all to consult over the matter in utmost privacy for our success at the present moment. The root of Kingdom lies in the council in the secret place (cabinet) and Statesmanship;

if this counsel be kept well preserved in secrecy, then that Kingdom is also kept entire; therefore it is highly incumbent that the plan be kept in strictest confidence amongst the good and virtuous ministers. If the plan be out, then destruction comes both to the King and his Kingdom; hence the plan must be kept secret by those wanting glory, lest it be taken advantage of and rendered ineffective by other persons. O Ministers! Now declare, taking due consideration of time and place, after duly discussing and ascertaining what is the best course to adopt, what would be beneficial and full of reason and intelligence. First find out the cause: why this powerful woman created by the Devas has come here alone and helpless? That woman is challenging us to fight. What more wonder can there be than this? Who can say in the three worlds what the result will be, whether it will be good or otherwise? Victory comes not to many persons nor defeat comes to a single individual; therefore victory or defeat lies at the hands of the Luck and Destiny. Those who plead for place, policy, statesmanship, they say what is Fate? Is there anyone who has seen Fate? No one has seen His appearance. It may be argued that there may exist such a thing as Fate; to which it might be replied, what proofs are there for such an existence? Thus the weak persons alone hold it out as their only hope; nowhere are seen energetic persons who can fulfil their ends by their own efforts, by those who enrol themselves under Fate. Therefore "effort," "energy" are the words of the heroes and "Fate" is the word of the cowards. You should all consider today these subjects fully and intelligently and then decide what are we to do.'

31-39. Vyāsa said: "Thus hearing the King, the famous Vidālāksa with folded hands spoke thus: 'O King! First it should be definitely ascertained whose wife is She, this woman possessing large eyes? Whence and for what purpose has She come here; next what ought to be done should be decided. It seems to me that the Devas, knowing that your death will ensue from the hands of a woman, have very carefully created this lotus-eyed woman out of their own essences. And they are lying in wait unknown to anybody in the celestial space with a desire to see the battle but really to fight with you. In due time, they will undoubtedly help this woman. When

the war will ensue, Viṣṇu and the other Devas will put this woman in front and slay us all. Whereas this Devī will slay you. This is their earnest desire. O King! I have come to know this beforehand; but what will be the actual result I cannot say. I cannot say also whether it is advisable for you to fight now; therefore it would be better if you consider yourself well on this matter of the gods and do accordingly. Our duty, the duty of your servants lies in this: That we should sacrifice at any moment our lives for the preservation of your prestige and to enjoy with you whenever you are enjoying. But, O King! It is extremely advisable to ponder over this very carefully when we see that this woman, though alone, is challenging us to fight who are armed with powerful soldiers.'

40-44. Durmukha said: 'O King! I know for certain that we will not get victory in this battle; still we ought not to show our backs; for that would lead us to sheer disgrace. Even in our encounter with Indra and other Devas, we did nothing hateful and blameable; then how can any of us fly away when we come face-to-face with a helpless woman? Therefore fight we must; that is certain; let whatever happen. What is inevitable, must come to pass. Thus considered, what need we care for the result? If we die in the battle, we will get name and fame; if we be victorious, we will get happiness. Thus thinking both the cases, we must fight today. Death is inevitable when our longevity expires; our prestige will suffer if we fly away; therefore we ought not to spend uselessly our time in thus expressing our vain regret for life or for death.'

45-51. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the Durmukha's words, Vāskala, the eloquent speaker, thus spoke to the king, with clasped hands and his head bowed down. 'O King! You need not think thus in agony with this unpleasant affair; alone I will kill that Caṇḍīkā, of unsteady eyes. O Best of kings! To be always prompt and energetic indicates that one is steady in one's heroic valor; to consider one's enemy as dreadful is contrary to above; so we ought now to take recourse to heroic valor. O King! Therefore I will discard fear altogether and fight out Valiantly; I will no doubt, send Caṇḍīkā in the battlefield to the abode of Death. I fear not Yama, nor Indra,

nor Kuvera, nor Vāyu nor Agṇi, nor Viṣṇu, nor Śaṅkara, nor Moon nor Sun; I do not fear any of them; what fear can I, then, entertain of that vain arrogant woman, who has got none to support Her. I will kill Her with these arrows, sharpened on stones. You can see today the prowess of my arms and enjoy peace; you will not have to go to battle anymore to fight with Her.'

52-65. Vyāsa said: "O King! Vāskala having said thus to the lord Mahiṣa in a haughty spirit, Durdhara bowed down and said thus: 'O Lord of the earth! Let the purpose be whatsoever, with which the beautiful Devī with eighteen hands, the creation of the gods, may come hither—I will vanquish Her. O King! I think, it is simply to terrify you, as the Suras have thus created this Māyā woman; therefore, do you forsake your delusion by knowing this merely as a scare. O King! Such is the statesmanship; now hear about the workings of the ministers. Ministers in this world are of three kinds: *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. Those ministers in whom the *sattva* quality is predominant, perform their Master's duties according to their own strength. The *sāttvik mantris* (ministers) are well versed in their *mantra-śāstras* (the policies and statesmanship), virtuous and one-pointed in their thoughts, they never do any injury to their king and they fulfil their own purposes. The *rājasik-mantris* are of different sorts; they are always after their own interests; at times, whenever they like, they do the State duties. The *tāmasik-mantris* always look of their own interests out of their greedy nature; they serve their ends even by ruining the regal interests. It is the *tāmasik-mantris* that are influenced by the bribes from the enemies, become separated at their hearts from their own masters and give out the secrets to the enemies, while staying in their homes. They always advise alienation policy like the sword ensheathed in a scabbard; and when the time of war comes, they always frighten their masters. Therefore, O King! Never put your trust in ministers; if you do so, they will always hinder you in your actions and counsels; what harm cannot be done by those ministers that are treacherous, greedy, deceitful and void of any intelligence and always addicted to vicious acts, when they are trusted? Therefore, O King! I will go myself to the battle and serve your purpose; you need not be at all anxious

in this matter. I will soon bring before you that vicious woman; I will do your actions by my own strength and powers. Let you be calm; and look at my strength, fortitude and valor.'

Here ends the Twelfth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the holding of counsel by Mahiṣāsura in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand Ślokas by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIII—Killing of Vāskala and Durmukha

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! The two powerful Dānavas Vāskala and Durmukha, well-versed in arts of warfare, went out for battle, maddened with their prowess. The two Dānavas, elated with vanity, went to the battlefield and began to address the Devī in voices deep as the rumbling of a cloud. 'O Beautiful Devī! You better choose and worship the Lord of the Daityas, that high-souled Mahiṣāsura who has conquered all the Devas. He will come before you in privacy in a human shape, with all auspicious signs and adorned with beautiful ornaments. O Sweet-smiling One! better place your highest feelings of love on the lovely Mahiṣa as your husband, and you will get all the pleasures of the three worlds as you desire. O Sweet-speaking! In short, if you select him as your husband, you will be the mistress of those incomparable worldly happinesses that women always aspire.'

7-13. Hearing thus the words of Vāskala and Durmukha, the Devī said: 'O stupid! Do you think Me as deluded by passion? Do I not possess strength and intelligence that I will worship that hypocrite Mahiṣa as husband? See! The ladies of a high family select those persons that are equal in rank as far as family and distinctions, qualifications and propriety of conduct are concerned, or those who are superior in beauty, cleverness, intelligence and other qualifications. Then how can a Devī, becoming passionate, worship the worst of all beasts, the beast Mahiṣa? O two Asuras! Go you immediately to your King Mahiṣa resembling in his body like an elephant and having a pair of horns and tell him, "Go either to Pātāla (the nether

regions) or come and fight with Me; the Lord of the Devas will no doubt be happy if the war ensues.” O stupid! My advent here cannot go in vain; I will easily slay you and then depart; knowing this do as you like. O beast! Without conquering Me, you would get no shelter either in the heavens, or in this earth, or in the caves of mountains.’

14-25. Vyāsa said: “Hearing thus, the two powerful Daityas, with eyes reddened with anger, firmly resolved to fight and took bows and arrows in their hands. O Descent of Kuru! The Devī then made a terrible noise and fearlessly stood there. The two Dānavas then began to shoot dreadful arrows at Her. For the victory of the Devas, the Devī also begin to hurl arrows after arrows on the two Dānavas, emitting a sweet sound. Vāskala first came forward with no delay; and Durmukha stood aloof there simply as a witness. The terrible fight then ensued between the Devī and Vāskala; arrows, swords and weapons were seen shining in the air and raised terror to those that were dull in intellect. Then the Mother of the Universe, seeing Vāskala growing turbulent, shot at him five arrows sharpened on stone. The Dānava, too, cut off the arrows of the Devī and hurled seven arrows at Her, seated on a Lion. The Devī cut off the Dānava’s arrows and shot at that hypocrite, sharpened arrows and began to laugh frequently. She again cut off his arrows with Ardhachandra arrow; Vāskala then pursued the Devī with a club in his hands to slay Her. Seeing the arrogant Dānava with club in his hands, Caṇḍīkā Devī struck him down on the ground with Her own club. The very powerful Vāskala fell down on the ground but rose up within a very short time and hurled his club at the Devī. Seeing him again attacking Her, the Devī got angry and pierced him with Her trident; Vāskala fell down, thus pierced, and died.

26-38. Vāskala falling thus dead on the field, the soldiers of the wicked demon routed; whereas the Devas became glad and repeatedly shouted aloud, “Victory to the Devī.” On this Daitya being slain, Durmukha came forward on the battlefield, filled with anger and accompanied by a stronger army. Mounted on a chariot, shielded all over his body with a coat of armor, Durmukha came before the Devī, shouting all along, ‘Wait, wait, O

You weak woman!' and with bows and arrows in his hands. The Devī blew Her conchshell and made sounds by stretching Her bow in order to make the Dānava infuriated with anger. The Asura then began to shoot sharp arrows after arrows like poisonous snakes. The Mahā-māyā, by Her own arrows, cut off those of Her enemy and began to shout loudly. The fight then raged furiously, when both parties began to use arrows, *śaktis,* clubs, *musalas* and *tomaras*. Blood began to flow in the battlefield in torrents like rivers and on the banks of that river of blood, were seen the severed heads of the dead bodies which looked like so many hollow shells of gourds, as if kept there by the attendant of the god of Death for swimming purposes. The battlefield then became very dreadful and impassable; at some places dead bodies are lying; wolves are feeding on their flesh; at other places are seen jackals, dogs, herons, crows, vultures, eagles and other voracious birds and beasts and iron-tipped arrows, eating the dead bodies of those wicked demons. Air began to emit an offensive smell, because of its contact with these corpses; and there were heard the heart-rending sounds of various carnivorous birds and animals. Then the wicked Durmukha began, as if inspired by the god of Death, to address the Devī angrily and arrogantly with his right hand raised up before Her. 'Your brain has become perverted; fly away just now or I will send you unto death, or you better accept the proud Mahiṣa, the lord of the Daityas, as your husband.'

39-50. The Devī said: 'O Villain! I see your death at hand this very day; therefore you are deluded and therefore raving like a madman. I will kill you today like Vāskala. O Stupid! Better fly away; or if you prefer death, then wait; I will slay you first; then the dull Mahiṣa, the son of a she-buffalo.' Hearing thus, Durmukha, as if prompted by Death, hurled dreadful arrows on the Devī. Instantly the Devī, too, cut off all his arrows and infuriated with anger, pierced the Dānava by sharpened arrows as Indra had pierced Vritrāsura before. The fight then turned out very dreadful. O King! Weak persons become very afraid and strong ones become very excited. Instantly the Devī cut off the Asura's bow and broke his chariot by five arrows. On seeing his chariot broken, the powerful Durmukha attacked on foot the Devī with his club, very hard to overcome.

He knocked at the head of the Lion with that club with great force; but the powerful Lion did not become unsteady, though so very hard hit. Seeing the demon thus standing before Her, the goddess Ambikā cut off his head by her sharpened axe. On his head being thus severed, Durmukha fell down dead on the field. The band of Immortals then loudly shouted, 'Victory to the Devī!' When Durmukha was slain, the Immortals from the celestial space began to chant praises and hymns to the Devī, showered down flowers on Her head and gave shouts of 'Victory to the Devī.' The Ṛṣis, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and Kinnaras all became very glad to see the Demon dead on the field."

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Vāskala and Durmukha in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIV—the Killing of Tāmra and Ciksura

1-4. Vyāsā said: "Hearing the death news of Durmukha, Mahiṣāsura became blind with anger and began to utter repeatedly to the Dānavas, 'O! What is this? What is this? Alas! That delicate woman has slain in battle the two heroes Durmukha and Vāskala! Lo! Now look at the wonderful workings of the Daiva (Fate). It is the acts virtuous, or otherwise that make men dependent; and the powerful Time awards pleasure or pain accordingly. The two powerful Demons are killed; what are we to do hereafter? You all judge and say what is reasonable at this critical juncture.'

5-23. Vyāsa said: "When the powerful Mahiṣa said thus, his general Ciksura, the great warrior spoke as follows: 'O King! Why are you so anxious as to take away the life of a delicate woman? I will kill Her.' Thus saying he departed for battle, mounted on his chariot and accompanied by his own army. The powerful Tāmra accompanied him as his attendant; the sky and all the quarters became filled with the clamor of their vast army. The auspicious Devī Bhagavatī saw them before Her, and She made an extraordinary wonderful sound with Her conchshell, with Her bowstring

and with Her great bell. The Asuras heard that and trembled and fled, speaking amongst each other, 'What is this?' The Ciksurāksa seeing them turning their backs, told them very angrily, 'O Dānavas! What fear has now overcome you? I will slay today this vain woman in the battle with arrows; so you should quit your fear and remain steady in battle.' Thus saying, the Dānava Chieftain Ciksura came fearlessly before the Devī with bows and arrows in his hands and, accompanied by his army, angrily spoke thus: 'O Thou of large and broad eyes! Why are you roaring to terrify the weak persons! O Soft-limbed One! I have heard all about your deeds but I am not a bit afraid of You. O One of beautiful eyes! It is a matter of disgrace, rather sin, to kill a woman; knowing this my heart wants to pass over this act, if my purpose be served without it.

O Beautiful One! The women fight with their side glances and amorous gestures; but I have never heard a woman like you coming to fight with arms and weapons. Even the delicate flowers, Mālati, etc., cause pain on the bodies of beautiful women like you; so it is not advisable to fight against you with flowers even; what to speak of sharpened arrows! Fie on those who spend their lives according to the *kṣatriya-dharma!* Oh! Who can praise that *dharma* which allows this dear body of ours to be pierced by sharpened arrows? This dear body is nourished by sweet food, by being smeared with oil, and by smelling the scents of beautiful flowers. Ought then one to destroy it by arrows from an enemy? Men get their bodies pierced by arrows and then become rich. Now is it possible for the riches to give pleasure afterwards when they caused such pains in the beginning? Even if this be so, fie on those riches! O Beautiful One! It seems you are not intelligent; why have you desired to fight instead of to enjoy sexual pleasures? O beautiful! What merits have you found in the battle that you have chosen this? Where you see the action of the axes and spears, striking each other with clubs, and hurling of sharpened arrows and weapons and where, when death comes, jackals come and feed upon the dead bodies, what merits have you been able to trace out in these things? It is only those cunning poets that praise these; they say that those who die in battle go to heaven! O Beautiful! Those sayings are, no doubt, mere flatteries.

Therefore, O Excellent One! Go away anywhere else you like; or accept this king Mahiṣa, the tormentor of the Devas, as your husband.'

24-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Dānava Ciksura speaking thus, the Divine Mother addressed him thus: 'O stupid! Why are you speaking false words having no significance, like a literary man giving out mere words only? You do not know anything of politics, ethics or metaphysics; you serve the illiterate and stupid; therefore, you are also a first-class illiterate; you do not know what are the royal duties; then what are you speaking before me? I will kill that Mahiṣāsura in battle and make the soil muddy with his blood, thus establish firmly My pillar of Fame and then go happily to My abode. Surely will I slay that vain vicious demon, the tormentor of the Devas. Better fight steadily. O stupid! Better go to Pātāla with all the Dānavas if you and Mahiṣa desire to live any longer. And if you like to go unto death, then be ready and fight without any delay; I will slay you all; this is My firm resolve.'

31-39. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the Devī's words, the Dānava, proud of his own strength, began to hurl instantly on Her showers of arrows, as if another shower of rain burst upon Her. The Devī cut off those arrows into pieces by Her sharp arrows and shot at him dreadful arrows like poisonous snakes. Then their fight became astounding to the public; the Divine Mother then struck him with Her club so much that he fell down from his chariot. That vicious demon, thus struck by the club, remained senseless near to his chariot for two *muhūrtas*, fixed like a mountain. Tāmra, the tormentor of the foes, seeing him thus, could not remain steady and came forward to fight with Caṇḍīkā. The Devī seeing him laughed and said, 'O Dānava! Come, Come, I will instantly send you unto death. Or, what is the use of your coming? You are so weak that you can be called lifeless. What is that stupid Mahiṣa doing now? Is he thinking out the way to save his life? You all are too weak; no use in killing you, all my labors will go in vain, if that wicked Mahiṣa, the enemy of the gods, be not slain. Therefore, do you go to your home and send here your king Mahiṣa. I am staying here in that form in which that wicked one likes very much to see Me.'

40-56. Hearing Her words, Tāmra became very angry and drawing his bow up to his ear, began to hurl arrows after arrows on Caṇḍīkā Devī. The Bhagavatī, too, had her eyes reddened with anger and drawing Her bow began to shoot arrows quickly at the demon, wishing to kill the enemy of the gods as early as possible. In the meanwhile, Ciksura regained his senses, and taking up again his bow in an instant, came before the Devī. Then Ciksura and Tāmra, the two valiant warriors, began to fight dreadfully with the Devī. Mahā-Māyā then became very angry and began to hurl arrows after arrows so incessantly that all the armors of all the Dānavas became pierced and were cut to pieces. The Asuras, thus pierced by arrows, became infuriated with anger and hurled angrily a network of arrows upon the Devī. The Dānavas, thus struck with sharp arrows and filled with cuts and wounds looked like the red Kimsuka flowers in the spring. The fight then grew so severe between Tāmra and Bhagavatī that the seers and the Devas, were all struck with wonder. Tāmra struck on the head of the lion with his dreadful hard *musala* (club), made of iron, and laughed and shouted aloud. Seeing him thus vociferating, the Devī became angry and cut off his head by her sharp axe in no time. The head being thus severed from the body, Tāmra, though headless, for a moment turned round his *musala* and then fell down on the ground. The powerful Ciksura, seeing Tāmra thus falling down, instantly took up his axe and ran after Caṇḍīkā. Seeing Ciksura with axe in his hand, the Bhagavatī quickly shot at him five arrows. With one arrow, his axe was cut down, with the second arrow his hands were cut and with the remaining ones his head was severed from his body. Thus when the two cruel warriors were slain, their soldiers soon fled away in terror in all directions. The Devas were exceedingly glad at their downfall and showered gladly flowers from the sky and uttered shouts of 'Victory to the Devī!' The Ṛṣis, Gandharvas, the Vetālas, the Siddhas and Chāranas were all very glad and began to utter repeated, 'O Goddess! Victory, victory be Yours'."

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Tāmra and Ciksura in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XV—the slaying of Vidālāksa and Asilomā

1-3. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the two Demons slain by the Devī, Mahiṣāsura became very much amazed and sent the powerful Asilomā, Vidālāksa and the other Dānavas to the battle to kill the Devī. The Dānavas, all very skilled in the art of warfare, marched on for battle, fully equipped with weapons and clad in armor, attended by a vast army. They arrived there and saw the Divine Mother with eighteen hands taking Her stand on a Lion, with axes and shield in Her hands.

4-5. The calm-tempered Asilomā appeared before the Devī ready to kill the Daityas, saluted Her and smilingly said: 'O Devī! Why have You come here? and what for You are killing these faultless Daityas? O Beautiful One! Tell all these to me truly. We will make treaty with You.

6-17. Take gold, jewels, pearls and any other excellent things You like and retire from the field as early as passible. Why do you like this warfare tending to increase misery? The wise persons say that it leads to the destruction of all happiness. Your body is very delicate; it cannot bear the stroke of flowers even; then why are you suffering the stroke of weapons on your body? I am very much puzzled to think these things. See! Cleverness is judged when peace is the result thereof; for it leads always to happiness. Then why are you liking to fight, which will lead only to pain and suffering? Happiness is only to be had and pain is to be avoided; this is the rule. O Devī! That happiness is again of two kinds: Permanent and transitory. The pleasure that comes out of the knowledge of *ātmā-jñāṇa* is permanent; but that which is derived from enjoyments is transitory; these who know truly the *Veda-śāstra* avoid this transitory pleasure of enjoyments. If you follow the opinion of the Mīmāṁsakas and do not believe in the existence of future births, even then you ought not to fight; when you have got this youthful age, you ought to enjoy the excellent pleasures in this world. O One of lean stomach! And if you doubt in the existence of the other worlds after death, even then you ought to desert from fighting and perform, in this life, such actions as will lead you to the

attainment of Heavens. This fully developed womanhood is transient; knowing this, do virtuous actions always. Wise ones always avoid tormenting others; thus one ought to perform things not contradictory to *dharma, artha* and *kāma*. Therefore, O Auspicious One! Do You also virtuous things always. O Mother! Why are you killing these Daityas without any cause? There is, again, the feeling of mercy; the lives again of all are dependent on Truth. Therefore the sages always preserve piety, mercy and Truth. O Beautiful One! Then what is the use in Your killing these Demons? Please say explicitly on this point.'

18-27. The Devī said: 'O Powerful one! Hear why I have come here and why I am killing the Daityas. I will answer your question on the above points. O Demon! I, though merely a spectator, always go about all over the worlds, seeing the justices and injustices done by the souls there. Never I possess any desire of enjoyment, nor have I greed for anything, nor have I enmity with any creature. Only to preserve the virtue and religion and to keep up the righteous, I roam over the worlds. This is My vow, and I always adhere to it. To preserve the good and to put down the evildoers is My duty. Many *avatāras* are to take Their incarnations, cycles after cycles, to preserve the *Vedas;* therefore I incarnate Myself *yuga* after *yuga*. Now the wicked Mahiṣa is ready to destroy the Devas; seeing this, I have come here to kill him. I tell you verily that I will slay that vicious powerful Mahiṣāsura, the enemy of the gods. Knowing this, you remain or depart as you desire. Or you can go to Mahiṣa, that impious son of a she-buffalo, and say "What is the use in sending other Asuras to the battle? You can come yourself and fight." If your king likes to make a treaty, then let him avoid his enmity with the Devas and go down to the Pātāla. Let him return to the Devas whatever he has taken perforce from them and go to the Pātāla, where Prahlāda is residing.'

28-29. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Hearing thus the Devī's words, Asilomā asked gladly, before the Devī, the powerful Asura Vidālāksa: 'Well, Vidālāksa! You have heard just now all what the Devī has said; now are we to observe treaty or declare war? What are we to do under the circumstances?'

30-34. Vidālākṣa said: 'Our king knows full well that his death will certainly take place in the battle; knowing this, out of his egoism and vanity he is not willing to make peace. He is seeing before him daily the deaths of the Dānavas, and still he has sent us to battle. Who can overcome Destiny? The duty of a servant is a very difficult one; he will have to be always submissive and obedient, without caring the least for his own self-respect; just as the dancing dolls are completely under the hands of the puppeteer, and their movements vary according to the pulling of the wires employed in making them dance. How can we then go to our master and say such hard words as he would give away to the Devas all the gems and jewels and go down to Pātāla with other Dānavas? One considers it one's duty to speak pleasant words, though untrue; true words cannot be beneficial; true and at the same time beneficial words are very rare in this world; in such critical cases, one ought to remain silent. Especially heroes ought never to excite their kings by useless words; this is the essence of politics. We should never go and advise our king with eagerness what is best, or to ask advice from him about such things; the king would then certainly be very angry. Therefore we ought to do our duty to the king, even if our lives be at stake. To consider our lives as nothing and to fight for our king are what is best for us.'

35-57. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus speaking, the two heroes then wore their coats of armor, mounted on their chariots and with bows and arrows in their hands, became ready to fight. First Vidālākṣa shot seven arrows; the great warrior Asilomā stood aloof at a distance as a mere witness. The Divine Mother cut those arrows to pieces with Her arrows no sooner than they reached Her, and then shot at Vidālākṣa three arrows sharpened on stone. The demon Vidālākṣa fell senselss by these arrows on the battlefield and after a short while died, as if ordained by Fate. Seeing Vidālākṣa thus dead, Asilomā took up his bows and arrows and came up to fight. The hero, then, raising his left hand, said briefly thus: 'O Devī! I know that death is inevitable to the Dānavas; still I am ready to fight; for I am dependent and Mahiṣa is of very dull intellect; he cannot make any distinction between what is really good and what is merely pleasant. I will

never speak before him unpleasant words, though beneficial. Rather I will sacrifice my life in the battlefield than advise him anything, be that auspicious or inauspicious. The Dānavas are being killed no sooner than they are shot at by your arrows; seeing this I consider Fate superior to all. Prowess does not lead to any success; fie on one's prowess!'

Thus saying, the Demon began to shower arrows after arrows on the Devī; the Devī, too, cut them to pieces with Her own arrows before they came to Her; and becoming angry, soon pierced him with arrows. The Devas witnessed this sight from above. The body of the Demon was then covered with cuts and wounds; blood began to flow from them; the Demon consequently began to shine like the jovial Kimsuka tree. Asilomā then lifted aloft his heavy iron club, ran after Caṇḍīkā and hurt the Lion on his head with anger. Not caring at all this severe stroke of the club inflicted by that powerful Demon, the Lion tore asunder his arms with his claws. Then that dreadful Demon leapt with club in his hand got up the shoulder of the Lion and hit the Devī very hard. O King! The Devī then baffled the hit and cut off the Demon's head with Her sharp axe. The head being thus severed, the Demon was thrown on the ground with great force; seeing this, a general cry of distress arose among his soldiers.

The Devas shouted aloud 'Victory to the Devī!' and chanted hymns to Her. The drums of the Devas resounded and the Gandharvas began to dance in great joy. Seeing the two Demons thus lying dead on the battlefield, the Lion killed some of the remaining forces by his sheer strength and ate up others, and made the battlefield void of persons. Some fled away in great distress to Mahiṣāsura. The fugitives began to cry aloud, 'Save us, save us!' and said, 'O King! Asilomā and Vidālāksa are both slain; and those soldiers that remained were eaten up by the Lion.' Thus they told and plunged the King in an ocean of dire distress. Hearing their words, Mahiṣa became absent-minded through pain and grief, and began to think over the matter with great anxiety."

Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the slaying of Vidālāksa and Asilomā in śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVI—Conversation between Devī and Mahiṣāsura

1-7. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing those words, the King Mahiṣa in anger addressed the charioteer Darūka: 'Bring over my chariot quickly. That chariot is drawn by one thousand excellent horses, is bedecked with banners, flags and ensigns, is furnished with various arms and weapons, and is endowed with good wheels of a white color, and beautiful poles in which the yoke is fixed.' The charioteer brought the chariot instantly and duly informed the king, 'O King! I have got the chariot ready at your door, your beautiful chariot, bedecked with beautiful carpets and various arms and weapons.' Hearing that the chariot had been brought, Mahiṣa thought, 'The Devī might not care to see me ugly-faced with a pair of horns; therefore I should assume a human shape and then go to the battle. Beauty and cleverness are the delights of women; therefore I will go before Her with a beautiful body and with all the cleverness and dexterity. For I will never be delighted with anything but that woman looking at me with fondness and becoming passionately attached to me.'

8-33. Thus thinking, the powerful King of the Demons quit his buffalo appearance and assumed a beautiful human shape. He put on beautiful ornaments, armplates, etc., wore divine cloths and had garlands on his neck and thus shone like a second Kandarpa, the god of Love. Taking, then, all the arrows and weapons, he mounted the chariot, and attended by his army, went to the Devī, elated with power and vanity. The Devī blew Her conchshell when She saw Mahiṣāsura the lord of the Dānavas come before Her with a handsome appearance, tending to captivate the minds of mistresses and surrounded by many powerful and valiant warriors. The King of the Demons heard the blow of the conchshell, wondrous to all, came up before the Devī and smilingly spoke to Her thus:

'O Devī! Whatever person there exists in this world, this wheel of *saṁsāra,* the eternal round of births and deaths, be he or she a man or a woman, always hankers after pleasure or happiness. And that pleasure is derived in this world by the combination of persons with each other; never is it seen where this combination is absent. Again this combination is of various kinds; I will mention them; hear. Union is of various kinds according as it arises out of affection or out of natural consequences. Of these, I will now speak of unions coming out of affection, as far as my understanding goes. The union that comes between father, mother and their sons arises out of affection; it is therefore good. The union between brother and brother is middling, for mutual interests of give and take are there between the two. In fact, that union is considered as excellent which leads to happiness of the best sort, and that union which leads to lesser happiness is known as mediocre. The union amongst the sailors coming from distant lands, is known as natural. They come on various errands concerning their varied interests. This combination, because it offers the least amount of happiness, is considered as worst. The best union leads in this world to best happiness.

O Beloved! The constant union of men and women of the same age is considered as par excellence; for it gives happiness of the very best sort. Both the parties, men and women, are elevated when they want to excel each other in their family connections, qualities, beauty; cleverness, dress, humility and propriety of conduct. Therefore, O Dear! If you establish with me that conjugal relation, you will no doubt get all the excellent happiness. Specially I will assume different forms at my mere will. All the Divine jewels and precious things that I have acquired after defeating Indra and the other Devas in battle, and others are lying in my palace; you can enjoy all of them as my queen consort or you can make a charity of them as you like. O Beautiful One! I am your servant; consequently, at your word, I will no doubt quit my enmity with the Devas. In short, I will do anything that leads to your pleasure and happiness. O Sweet-speaking One! O Large-eyed One! My heart is enchanted very much with your beauty; I will do, therefore, as you order me. O One having broad hips! I am very much

distressed; I now take refuge unto You. O One having beautiful thighs! I am very much struck with the arrows of Cupid, and I am very much discomforted; therefore, save me. To protect one who has come under one's refuge is the best of all virtues. O One of a somewhat whitish body! O One having a slender waist! I will spend the remaining portion of my life in serving you as your obedient servant. Never will I act contrary to your orders to the risk even of my life. Take this as literally true and do accordingly. I now throw aside all my weapons before Your feet; O Large-eyed! I am very much distressed by the arrows of Cupid; dost Thou therefore show Thy mercy on me. O Beautiful One! Never I showed my weakness to Brahmā and the other Devas; but today I acknowledge that before You. I have defeated Brahmā and others; they are fully acquainted with my prowess in the battlefield. But, O Honored Woman! Though I am so powerful, I now acknowledge myself as your servant. Better look at me and grant Your mercy.'

34. Vyāsa said: "O King! Mahiṣa, the lord of the Daityas, having said so, that beautiful Bhagavatī laughed loudly and spoke smiling:

35-45. The Devī said: 'I do not desire any other body than the Supreme One! O Demon! I am His Will power; I therefore create all these worlds. I am His Śivā Prakṛti (auspicious Nature); that Universal Soul is seeing Me. It is owing to His proximity that I am appearing as the Eternal Consciousness, Manifesting Itself as this Cosmos. As irons move owing to the proximity of magnets, I too, though inert, work consciously owing to His proximity. I do not desire to enjoy the ordinary pleasures. You are very dull and stupid; there is no doubt about this, when you desire sexual union. For women are considered as chains to hold men in bondage. Men bound up by iron chains can obtain freedom at any time, but when they are fastened by women, they can never obtain freedom. O stupid! You now want to serve the source of urine, etc. Take refuge under peace; peace will lead you to happiness. Great pain arises from connection with women; you know this, then why are you deluded? Better avoid your enmity with the Devas and roam over the world anywhere you like. Or, if you desire to live,

go to Pātāla; or fight with Me. Know this for certain, that I am stronger than you. O Dānava! The Devas collected have sent Me here; I tell you this very truly; I am satisfied with you by your words of friendship; therefore dost thou fly away while you are living. See! When words are uttered seven times amongst each other, friendship is established between saints. That has been done so amongst us; so there is friendship now between you and Me; I won't take away your life. O hero! If you desire to die, fight gladly; O powerful one! I will, no doubt, kill you.'

46-65. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing Bhagavatī's words, the Dānava, deluded by passion, began to speak in beautiful sweet words: 'O Beautiful One! Your body and the several parts thereof are very delicate and beautiful. A mere sight of such a lady makes one enchanted. Therefore, O Beautiful-faced one! I fear very much to strike against your body. O Lotus-eyed One! I have subjugated Hari, Hara, the Lokapālas and the several other Devatās; I therefore ask whether it is proper for me to fight with You! O Fair one! If you like, you marry and worship me, or you can return to your desired place whence you have come. You have declared friendship with me; I therefore do not like to strike any weapons on you. I have now spoken for your good and welfare. You can gladly go away. O beautiful one! You are a fair woman with beautiful eyes; what fame shall I earn by killing you? O One of slender waist! Murdering a woman, a child or a Brāhmaṇa certainly makes the murderer liable to suffer the consequences thereof. I will certainly carry you today to my place without killing you. If I use force to you, I will not get happiness; for in such cases, the application of force leads to no happiness. O One having good hair! I salute before you and speak that a man cannot be happy without the lotus face of a woman; similarly a woman cannot be happy without a man's lotus face. Where comes off the good combination between these two, then the highest pitch of happiness is conceived and pain arises on the disjunction thereof. True that you are well decked with ornaments all over your body, but you seem wanting in cleverness, for you are not worshipping me. Who has advised you to renounce enjoyments? O Sweet-speaking One! If this be true; then surely he is your enemy; he has deceived you. O Dear! Leave your

stubbornness and marry me; both of us shall then be happy. Viṣṇu shines well with Kamalā, Brahmā looks splendid with Savitrī, Rudra is well associated with Parvatī and Indra with Śachī; so I will shine well with you —there is no doubt about this. No woman can ever be happy without a good husband. And why are you not then acknowledging me Your husband even when You have got him? O Beloved! Where is now that Cupid of dull intellect? Why is he not troubling You with his maddening delicate five arrows? O Fair one! I think that Madana (the god of Love) out of his pity to you, seeing that You are very weak, is not striking his arrows on You as he has done to me. O One looking askance! Or it may be that I have got some enmity with that Cupid; else why is he not shooting arrows at You? Or my enemies the Devas have advised the God of Love not to dart his arrows on You. O One of slender body! As Mandodarī when she became passionate, had to marry afterwards a hypocrite, and so she had to repent thinking that she had not married before a beautiful auspicious king; so I think, O One having eyes like the young of a deer! You, too, will have to repent like her if you decline to marry me now.'

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the conversation between the Devī and Mahiṣāsura in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVII—the Story of Mandodarī

1-2. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus, the Devī asked the Dānava, 'Who is that Mandodarī? Who is that king who was not first taken by her? And who is that king whom she married afterwards? And how did she repent afterwards? Describe all these in detail to me.'

3-26. Thus asked by the Devī, Mahiṣa began to say: 'O Devī! There is a place named Simhala in this earth, decorated with various trees and prosperous with wealth and grains. A virtuous king named Chandrasena used to reign there; he was calm, peaceful, truthful, heroic, charitable, steady, forbearing, well versed in polities, ethics and morals vast as a wide

ocean, learned in *śāstras*, knowing all forms of religion and much skilled in archery. He was mindful in governing his subjects and used to punish according to the laws of Justice. The king had a beautiful well-qualified wife, very handsome and broad-hipped. She was very much devoted to her husband, always engaged in religious acts and of good conduct. This wife, endowed with all auspicious signs, gave birth to a beautiful daughter in her first delivery. The King Chandrasena, the father, was very pleased to have this beautiful daughter and gladly called her by the name of Mandodarī (beautiful mouth). This daughter began to grow daily like the phases of the Moon. When she grew ten years old, she became very handsome. The King now became anxious to have a suitable bridegroom and used to think of it every day. The Brāhmaṇas then told the king that there was a prince named Kambugrīva, the intelligent son of the powerful king Sudhanvā of Madra; this prince was endowed with all kingly qualifications and versed in all knowledge, and was therefore a fit match for Mandodarī. The king then asked his dear qualified wife that he would like to marry his daughter to Kambugrīva. The queen, hearing this, asked her daughter Mandodarī that her father was desiring to marry her to Kambugrīva, the son of the king of Madra.

Hearing her mother's words, Mandodarī spoke thus: "O Mother! I have got no desire to marry; I will not accept any husband; I will take the vow of leading a chaste virgin life and thus pass the rest of my life. O Mother! There is nothing more miserable in this ocean of world than dependence; I therefore prefer to lead incessantly a life of severe asceticism. The Paṇḍitas versed in the *śāstras* say that taking up the vow of separateness and independence leads to salvation. I will thus be liberated; I have no need for a husband. At the time of marriage ceremony, one has to say before the consecrated fire that one will remain always a dependent to one's husband in every way; besides in a father-in-law's house, one has to pass one's time as a slave, as it were, to one's mother-in-law and to husband's (younger) brothers; again one will have to think oneself as happy when one's husband is happy and as unhappy when one's husband is unhappy; this is the worst of all miseries. Again if the husband marries again another

woman, then this misery of having a co-wife is extreme. O Mother! Jealousy arises then towards even one's own husband, therefore suffering is endless. Therefore what happiness can there be in this dream-like world, especially with women who are made dependent by Nature? O Mother! I heard that in days of yore the religious son of Uttānapāda, Uttama was younger than Dhruva; and yet he became King. And the King Uttānapāda banished his dear wife, solely devoted to her husband, to the forest without any cause. Therefore women have to suffer such diverse pains while their husbands are living; and if by chance the husband dies, then women get interminable pains; the widowhood becomes the only source of grief and sorrow. Again if the husband be in foreign lands, women become subjected to the fire of Cupid, and then the house becomes an object of more agony. Thus whether the husband lives or dies, there is no happiness at any time. Thus, according to my opinion, I ought never to accept any husband.'

27-31. The Mother then told her husband all about what the daughter had said. Mandodarī would accept the vow of a lifelong virgin; she had no desire to marry. She had brought forward many faults in a worldly life and thus would perform vows and *japams* and pass her time alone. She did not yearn after a husband. The King, hearing thus, came to know that his daughter had no intention to marry and so began to pass his time without giving away his daughter in marriage. Thus the daughter lived in family protected by her father and mother; by that time signs of puberty were seen in the body of the daughter. Her comrades requested her repeatedly to select a bridegroom; but she spoke many words of wisdom and did not show any inclination for marriage.

32-44. Once, on an occasion, that beautiful faced-woman went out with her female attendants on a pleasure trip to a garden, beautified with various trees. There the slender-bodied one began to play and enjoy with her comrades in picking up various flowers and beautiful flowering creepers. Just at that time, the famous King of Kosala, the powerful Vīrasena came there accidentally. Alone he was on his chariot, attended by a few soldiers; his large army and retinue were coming slowly behind him at some

distance. Her comrades, then, looking at that King from a distance, told Mandodarī, "O friend! See! Somebody, strong and beautiful, like a second God of Love is coming towards us, mounted on a chariot. I think some King he will be and we are very lucky that he has come here." While thus talking, the King arrived there. The King, looking on that blue-colored woman with beautiful eyes became surprised. Getting down from the chariot, he asked the maidservant, "O Gentle one! Who is this woman with large eyes! Who is her father? Tell me this without any delay." The attendant smiling, told him thus: O Beautiful-eyed One! Pray speak first who are you? What for have you come here? What do you want to do here?" The female attendant thus asking him, the King replied: "There is a very beautiful country named Kosala on this earth; I am the King of that place; my name is Vīrasena. My fourfold army is coming at my will at my back. I have lost my way and have come here. Know me as the King of the country Kosala."

45-49. The female attendant said: "O King! This lotus-eyed one is the daughter of the King Chandrasena; her name is Mandodarī. She has come here in this garden for sporting." Hearing thus the attendant's words, the King replied: "O Sairandhri! You appear to be smart; therefore make the King's daughter understand my following words clearly! 'O Sweet-eyed one! I am the King descended from the Kakutstha line; O fair woman! Marry me according to the rules of Gandharva marriage. O broad-hipped One! I have no other wife; you are a beautiful woman of a good family and of a marriageable age; I therefore like to marry you. Or your father may marry you to me according to rules and ceremonies; if so, I will no doubt be your husband as you desire'."

50-55. Mahiṣa said: 'O Devī! The female attendant, expert in the science of love, hearing the King's words, spoke to the daughter smilingly and in sweet words. "O Mandodarī! A very good-looking beautiful King of the solar dynasty has come here; he is very pretty, powerful, and of your age; O Beautiful! The King is entirely devoted to you and loves you very much. O Large-eyed One! Your time of marriage has come and yet you have not

married; rather you are against it. Your father is therefore always very sorry and remorseful. See! How many a time your father sighed and told us, 'O attendants! Always serve my daughter and awaken her to this.' But you are engaged in penances and austerities, in *hatha-dharma;* therefore we cannot request you on this matter. The Munis have said: 'To serve the husband is the highest virtue of a woman.' O Large-eyed! Women get Heaven if they serve their husband; therefore you better marry according to rules and ceremonies."

56. Mandodarī said: "I am not going to marry; better that I should perform an extraordinary *tapasyā*. O girls! You go and ask the King to desist in his request; why is he shamelessly looking at me.

57-59. The female attendant then said, "O Devī! Passion is very hard to conquer; time is also surmountable with difficulty; so know my advice as the medicinal diet and keep my request. And if you do not keep it, surely danger will befall you." Hearing this, Mandodarī replied, "O attendant! I know whatever is ordained by Fate will inevitably come to pass; for the present, I am not going to marry at all."

60-61. Mahiṣa said: 'The female attendant, knowing this her obstinate view, told the King: "O King! This woman likes not a good husband; you would better go wherever you like." The King heard and did not want to marry that woman anymore; and, being sad and broken-hearted, went back with his army to Kosala.'

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on Mandodarī's accounts in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XVIII—Killing of the Dānava Mahiṣāsura

1-4. Mahiṣa said: 'O Devī! Mandodarī had a sister Indumatī; unmarried and endowed with all auspicious signs. She grew up in time to a marriageable

age. The *svayaṁvara* assembly was then called for the marriage of the maiden Indumatī. The Kings from various parts came there and the maiden Indumatī selected from among them a beautiful strong king, of noble lineage and endowed with all auspicious signs. At that time, by the indescribeable power of Destiny, Mandodarī seeing the deceitful, cunning, and hypocrite King of Madra, became passionate and desired to marry him.

5-17. That slender woman Mandodarī then addressed her father thus: "O Father! Seeing the King of Madra in this assembly, I am desirous to marry him; so perform also my marriage ceremony now." When the king heard this request from his own daughter privately, he became very glad and began promptly to make preparations for the marriage. He invited the King of Madra to his own palace and gave him in marriage his own daughter Mandodarī, according to due rites and ceremonies with an abundance of dowry and wealth. The King of Madra Chārudesna became very glad to marry the beautiful Mandodarī and went back with her to his own abode.

The King Chārudesna then enjoyed her for good many days, until one day a maidservant found the king in sexual intercourse with another maidservant in a lonely place and divulged this to Mandodarī; she finding the king in that state became angry and rebuked him with a slight smiling countenance. Again, on another occasion, Mandodarī saw the king willingly engaged in amusements and sports with an ordinary beautiful woman and became very sorry and thought thus: 'When I saw him in the Svayaṁvara, I could not recognize him as a cheat; I am deceived by this King; Oh! What a wrong act have I done through delusion. This King is a rogue, he is totally shameless and has no dislike for contemptible things; it is now too late to repent for him. How can I have any affection for this husband; fie on my living now! I forsake from this very day all the pleasures with my husband all other worldly pleasures, and I take recourse now to contentment alone. I have committed a very wrong act that I ought never to have done; therefore it causes intense pain to me now. If I now commit suicide, then that sin will never forsake me, and I must have to

enjoy the consequences thereof. And if I return to my father's house, I will not be happy there, for my companions seeing me thus will, no doubt, ridicule me. Therefore, it is now advisable for me to avoid all the sensuous pleasures, become dispassionate and remain here patiently and abide by the strange combinations of Time.'

18-20. Mahiṣa said: 'Thus that women lamented and remorsed and began to remain there, very much sorrowful and distressed, renouncing thoroughly all the pleasures of the world. O Auspicious One! I am the king, yet you are showing your dislike for me; know that eventually, you too will be passionate and entertain afterwards an illiterate coward. Keep my word even now, it will be of great benefit and it will serve as a medicinal diet to you as to all women. In case you do not follow my advice, you will have to meet with extreme pain and misery, certainly.'

21-25. Hearing the words of Mahiṣāsura, the Devī said: 'O you fool! Go to the lower worlds or stand up for fight; I will send you and the other Dānavas unto death and then go away at My pleasure. O Demon! I take up form to preserve the righteous, whenever they suffer pain in this earth. O Lord of the Daityas! Formless, birthless I am; yet at times, I take up form and be born to save the Devas. Know this firmly. O wicked Mahiṣa! The Devas prayed to Me for your destruction. Therefore I will not rest until I kill you. I speak all these truly to you. Therefore fight or go to Pātāla, the abode of the Asuras; I speak truly to you again that I will destroy you wholly.'

26-51. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the Devī's words, the Dānava took up his bow and came to battle, fully stretching the string of his bow up to his ears, and began to shoot sharpened arrows with great force at the Devī. The Devī, too, hurled with anger arrows tipped with iron and cut the Asura's arrows to pieces. The fight between them rose to such a terrible pitch that it caused terror to both the Devas and the Dānavas, trying hard to be victorious over each other. In the midst of the terrible encounter, the demon Durdhara came up to fight and made the Devī angry and shot

arrows, all terribly poisonous and sharpened on stones, at Her. The Bhagavatī then got very angry and hit him hard with sharp arrows. Durdhara, struck thus, fell down dead on the battlefield like a mountaintop. The demon Trinetra, well skilled in the uses of arrows and weapons, seeing him killed, came up to fight and shot at the Great Goddess with seven arrows. Before these arrows came on Her, She cut them to pieces with Her sharp arrows and by Her trident killed Trinetra. Trinetra thus killed, Andhaka quickly came in the battlefield and struck violently on the head of the Lion with his iron club. The Lion killed that powerful Andhaka by striking the demon with his nails and out of anger, began to eat his flesh.

Mahiṣāsura became greatly astonished at the deaths of these Asuras and began to shoot pointed arrows, sharpened on stone, at Her. The Devī Ambikā cut his arrows in two before they came on Her, and struck the Demon on his breast by Her club. That vile Mahiṣāsura, the tormentor of the Devas, fell in a swoon under the stoke of the club but patiently bore it, and at the next moment, came again and struck the Lion on his head by his club. The Lion, too, by his nails rent that great Asura to pieces. Mahiṣāsura, then, quitting the man-form took up the lion-form and by his claws cut the Devī's Lion and wounded him very much by his nails. On Mahiṣāsura taking up this lion-form, the Devī became very angry and began to shoot arrows after arrows at him, all very terrible, sharp and like poisonous snakes. Then the Asura quitting the lion-form assumed the appearance of a male elephant oozing out juice from his temples, and began to hurl mountaintops by his trunk. Seeing the mountain peaks thus hurled on Her, She cut them to pieces by Her sharp arrows and began to laugh. The Devī's Lion on the other hand, sprang on the head of the elephant Mahiṣa and by his claws rent him to pieces. To kill the Devī's Lion, then, Mahiṣa quit his elephant-form and assumed the appearance of a Sarabha, more powerful and terrible than a lion. The Devī seeing that Sarabha became angry and struck the head of that Sarabha with Her axe; the Sarabha, too, attacked the Devī. Their fight became horrible; Mahiṣāsura, then, assumed the appearance of a buffalo and struck the Bhagavatī by his horns. That

horrible Asura, of hideous appearance, swinging his tail, began to attack the thin-bodied Devī. That violent Asura caught hold of mountain peaks by his tail and whirling them round and round, hurled them at the Devī. That vicious soul, then maddened with his strength, laughed incessantly and addressed Her thus: 'O Devī! Be steady in the battlefield. I will send you today unto death, and your youth and beauty too. You are an illiterate fellow as you have come maddened to fight with me. Really You are deluded in your pretensions that you are very strong; this idea of yours is absolutely false. I will kill you first and the hypocrite Devas after who want to vanquish me by standing up a woman in their front.'

52-53. The Devī said: 'O Villain! Do not boast; keep yourself firm in the fight. Today I will kill you and make the Devas discard their fear. O wretch! You are a sinner; you torment the Devas and terrify the Munis. Let me have my drink of sweet decoction of grapes. And then I will slay you undoubtedly.'

54-70. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Saying thus, the Devī, wrathful and eager to kill Mahiṣāsura, took up the golden cup filled with wine and drank again and again. When the Devī finished Her drink of the sweet grape juice, She pursued him with trident in Her hands, gladdening all the Devas. The Devas began to rain showers of flowers on the Devī, praised Her and shouted victories to Her with Dundubhi (a divine drum) 'Jai, *jīva!'* (victory, live). The Ṛṣis, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Piśāchas, Uragas, and Kinnaras witnessed the battle from the celestial space and became very much delighted. On the other hand Mahiṣāsura, the hypocrite Paṇḍita, began to assume various magic forms and struck the Devī repeatedly. The Devī Caṇḍīkā, then, infuriated and with reddened eyes, pierced violently the breast of that vicious Mahiṣa with Her sharp trident. The Demon, then, struck by this trident, fell senseless on the ground; but got up in the next moment and kicked the Devī forcibly. That great Asura, thus kicking the Devī, laughed repeatedly and bellowed so loudly that the Devas were all terrified by the noise. Then the Devī held aloft the brilliant discus of good axle and of thousand spokes and loudly spoke to the Asura in front: 'O

stupid! Look! This *cakra* will sever your throat today; wait a moment, I am sending you instantly unto death.' Saying this, the Divine Mother hurled the *cakra*. Instantly that weapon severed the Dānava's head from his body. Hot streams of blood gushed out from his neck like violent streams of water from mountains, colored red with red sandstone. The headless body of that Asura moved to and fro for a moment, and then dropped on the ground.

Loud acclamations of "Victory" were sounded to the great joy of the Devas. The very powerful Lion began to devour the soldiers that were flying away, as if he was very hungry. O King! The wicked Mahiṣāsura thus slain, the Demons that remained alive were terrified and fled away, very much frightened, to Pātāla. The Devas, Ṛṣis, human beings and the other saints on this earth were all extremely glad at the death of this wicked Demon. The Bhagavatī Caṇḍīkā quit the battlefield and waited in a holy place. Then the Devas came there with a desire to praise and chant hymns to the Devī, the Bestower of their happiness."

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of the Dānava Mahiṣāsura in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XIX—Prayers and Hymns to the Devī

1. Vyāsa said: "O King! Then Indra and all the Devas became very glad to see the great Mahiṣāsura slain; they all began to praise and chant hymns to the World-Mother.

2-33. The Devas said: 'It is by Thy great power that Brahmā becomes able to create this world, Viṣṇu to preserve, and Maheśvara to destroy during the time of *pralaya,* the Great Dissolution of this universe. But when they are bereft of Thy power, they are quite unable to do such. Therefore, O Devī! Thou art undoubtedly the Prime Cause in the preservation and destruction of this whole Universe. O Devī; Thou art, in this world, Fame, idea and

ideal, memory; Thou art the goal, mercy, compassion, faith, constancy, earth; Thou art Kamalā, the *mantra-japā*, respiration and perspiration, nourishment, Jayā, Vijayā (the destroyer of obstacles; a name of Durgā); Thou art contentment, correct notion, measure, intellect, Ramā (Lakṣmī), wealth, knowledge, forgiveness, beauty, intelligence; Thou art the *śakti* (power) of Rudra, Thou art Girijā, the Energy of God Umā and all other forces in this universe; this is known to everyone in the three worlds. Without any or all of these forces, no one is able to perform any action. Thou art the Supreme Cause of all this world. Therefore everything rests on Thee. If Thou wert not the upholding power, how could Kūrma in the Tortoise Incarnation and Ananta have upheld this world? O Mother! Wert Thou not this Earth, could all these world-load of things have rested on the sky? O Mother! Those human beings that worship Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Moon, Fire, Yama the God of Death, Vāyu, Gaṇeśa, and the other Devas, are certainly deluded by Thy Māyā. Could all those Devas do any action or any favor without Thy energy? O Mother! Those that offer in any sacrifice, a profuse quantity of ghee as oblations to the several Devas are certainly of very narrow views; Wert Thou not the Svāhā, could it have been possible for those Devas to get the offered oblations at that very instant? Certainly, therefore, they are fools and ignorant persons. There is no doubt about this.

O Mother! Thou givest the several objects of nourishment and enjoyment to all the beings in this universe by Thy parts, the several transformations of these material things; it is Thou that nourishest the Devas, Thy devotees, as well as the others like the Dānavas, according to their *karma*. O Mother! As the owner of any garden plants sees with pleasure the beautiful trees in his garden for his delight and, finding some of them not to bear any fruits or leaves or of a bitter taste, does not cut them off by their roots, so O Devī! Thou hast brought into existence these Daityas out of their inferior *karmas* and Thou art supporting them. Knowing that the Daityas like to enjoy the celestial nymphs, Thou hast, out of compassion, killed them by arrows in the battlefield, to afford them facilities in their rebirth in Heaven, and thus to enjoy the Deva women which they could not have got in any other possible way. Therefore this Thy dealings with them are to fulfil their

intentions and not to kill them. O Mother! It is a great wonder that to kill these Asuras Thou hadst to assume this Divine Body; Thou couldst have done so by Thy mere will. It seems that this act of Thine is but a mere *līlā* (pastime). There is no other cause for this. O Devī! Those human beings that do not worship Thee in this dreadful age of Kali are certainly deceived by the cunning *Purāṇa* makers, who have deluded them to worship Hari and Hara, who are Thy creations. Oh! What an amount of evil has befallen those poor souls! O Devī! Those men know that the Devas, tormented by the Asuras, are Thy devotees, and yet they worship them; certainly such fellows, holding lighted torches in their hands, plunge deep into the darkest waterless wells. O Mother! Thou art the Vidyā (Blissful Intelligence) and Thou grantest pleasure and liberation; Thou art the Avidyā, (Great Delusion) and thus Thou causest bondage and pain in this world. O Mother! Thou only destroyest the affliction of the human beings; those that want liberation worship Thee, and those that are ignorant and attached to worldly enjoyments do not worship Thee. What more can be said than this—that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahesa and the other Devas incessantly worship Thy adorable lotus-feet; but those men that are of dull intellect and are mistaken, do not meditate Thy feet and therefore, they come again and again into this ocean of the world. O Caṇḍīkā! It is through the grace of the dust of Thy lotus-feet that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are creating, preserving and destroying this universe. Therefore, O Goddess! Those men that do not serve Thee are certainly very unfortunate. O Mother of the Universe! Thou art the Goddess of speech of the Suras and the Asuras; thus if Thou didst not dwell in their mouths, they would not have been able to utter a single word; therefore, O Goddess! how can men speak, when they are thus deprived of Thee! O Mother! It is due to the curse of Bhṛgu Muni that Hari takes several incarnations as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion and deceitful Dwarf; all these show clearly the dependence of Hari.

How, then, can they avoid the fear of death when they serve these dependent incarnations! O Mother! It is well known that the male generative organ of Śambhu, Mahādeva fell unto the ground owing to the

curse of Bhṛgu Muni, when he went to the hermitage of the Ṛṣis. How can, then, happiness come in this world or in the next, to those who worship such a Śambhu who wears human skulls on His body! O Devī! Those that worship Gaṇeśa, born of the above qualified Mahādeva are awfully mistaken; they are especially quite ignorant of Thee, the Goddess of the Universe, who can be easily worshipped and can give the fourfold aims of human existence.

O Devī! Out of Thy kindness that Thou hast slain with Thy arrows the enemies and thus hast translated them into Heavens; otherwise they would have certainly gone down to Hell owing to their own *karmik* effects. Brahmā, Hari, Hara and the other Devas cannot realize Thy greatness; how then can ordinary men know Thee, when they are deluded by immeasureably strong *sāttva*, *rājas* and *tāmas* qualities? O Mother! Those who do not worship Thy lotus-feet as very difficult to be brought to this understanding, and therefore worship this visible Sun and Fire; they cannot grasp the essence of the *Vedas*, demonstrated by hundreds of passages of *śruti;* they are deluded and simply suffer pains.

O Mother! The influences of Thy *sāttva*, *rājas* and *tāmas* qualities are widely known in this world; those qualities, taught in various deluding schools of *Tantras* by various persons, stimulate people to the worship of Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Sun and Gaṇeśa and thus detract them from worshipping Thee. O Mother! Those that detract thus the Brāhmaṇas from worshiping Thy lotus-feet and advise them through the *āgamas* to worship Hari, Hara and others, Thou dost not get angry with them, rather Thou dost show Thy kindness to them and make them widely celebrated as possessing the occult powers of enchanting, bringing others under their control, or attracting towards them various other persons. In the Satya Yuga, *sāttva-guṇa* was more powerful, and therefore the untrue *śāstras* could not rear their heads; but in this Kālī Age, owing to the *sāttva-guṇa* being not so powerful, the lower qualities preponderate. So these so-called clever Paṇḍitas instead of worshipping Thee, worship Hari, Hara and the other Devas, the products of their fancy and hide Thee. O Mother! Thou art the

brahma-vidyā, the knowledge of the Supreme Consciousness, Thou givest liberation to Thy devotees when they succeed in their *yoga*. Therefore the pure *sāttvik* Munis meditate on Thee, and Thee alone. Those that get themselves diluted in Thee are very blessed; what more to speak of them in their praise, they will no longer have to suffer any pains in their mother's wombs!

O Mother! Thou art inherent as cit-śakti (the power of consciousness) in the Supreme Spirit and therefore He becomes manifest specially as this Great Cosmos and becomes known as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of this world, fashioned out of five elements. O Devī! What male can by his own power work out this *jagat-prapañca*, enjoy it and move in this without the aid of Thy power? O Bhagavatī! This universe has been created by Thee; Thou art therefore its Mother. The twenty-four essences or *tattvas* are inert; how can they create this universe without Thy *cit-śakti?* O Devī! Never can these senses and organs, endowed with *guṇa* and *karma*, do any work or bestow any fruits without Thy energy.

O Mother! Wert thou not Svāhā, the instrumental cause in the sacrifice, how could the Devas have got their shares of the ghee offered in the *yajñas* by the Munis! Therefore, O Devī! Thou art, no doubt, preserving this universe. O Bhagavatī! It is Thou that hast created this world in the beginning; it is Thou that art preserving the gods Hari, Hara and others; it is Thou that art destroying this universe at the end. Therefore, O Brahman! The Devas cannot know Thy deeds; how then can the men who are of dull intellect know Thee? O Mother! Thou hast now saved the Devas by killing this terrible Mahiṣāsura. O Mother! All the *Vedas* have not been able to know exactly all Thy movements; how can we, of dull intellect, praise Thee? O Mother! Thou has served our cause by killing our enemy, the wicked Dānava, the inconceivable source of pain to all the world by this act of Thine. Thy fame has spread far and wide in this universe; therefore, O Thou of renowned prowess! Thou art the Mother of this world; save us, and maintain us by Thy mercy.'

34-35. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas having praised the Devī thus, the Devī addressed them gently: 'O Devas! Say if you have any other difficult thing for Me to do; remember Me whenever any difficult crisis occurs to you; I will destroy that evil."

36-42. The Devas said: "O Devī! All our purposes have been served when Thou hast killed lately our enemy Mahiṣāsura. Now dost Thou do for us so that we can always recollect Thy lotus feet, and our Bhakti be firm and steadfast towards Thee. It is only the Mother the bears the thousand offences of the son; we, therefore, cannot say why men, knowing this, do not worship the Mother of the Universe. There are two birds always dwelling in this body, Jivātmā (human soul) and the Paramātmā (the Supreme Soul). They are so very intimate friends toward each other that they never separate. But there is no other third friend that can bear the faults of these two. Therefore the embodied soul that forsakes Thee, his friend, can never attain any welfare; what more to say on this! That vicious soul is very unlucky amidst the Devas and men, no doubt. He who on attaining this excellent human body, attained with much difficulty, does not remember Thee frequently by words and deeds, is certainly the vilest of men. O Devī! Whether in times of distress or happiness, Thou art our Savior; therefore dost Thou protect us with Thy best weapons. O Devī! There is no other means of our security than the Grace of the dust of Thy Feet."

43. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas having prayed to the Devī thus, the Devī vanished then and there. The Devas, seeing the disappearance of the Devī, were thunderstruck with surprise."

Here ends the Nineteenth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the prayer and hymns to the Devī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses, by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XX—the Peace of the World

1-11. Janamejaya said: "O best of Ṛṣis! I have now heard the wonderfully excellent deeds of the Devī for the enhancement of peace in this world. Though I have heard from thy lotus face these nectar-like words, still I am not satisfied. O best of Munis! What did the chief Devas do when the Goddess disappeared, kindly say to me. O Bhagavān! I think those *jīvas* that are less fortunate and have done not many meritorious deeds in this world cannot fully comprehend these excellent sacred deeds of the Devī.

O Muni! What to speak of the less fortunate souls, even the Mahātmas who are well versed in hearing such things, can hardly be satiated on hearing the Devī's deeds. O! Fie to those that do not hear of these things, the essence of essences, on hearing which men become Immortals. The Mother's *līlā* is to preserve the Devas as well as the great Munis, and to serve as a boat for the human beings to cross this ocean of world. How then can the grateful souls forsake Her? The Paṇḍitas versed in the *Vedas* declare that the Devī's life is able to fulfil all the desires. Therefore the intelligent souls who want liberation, the worldly souls, the diseased and distressed—all ought to drink incessantly the nectar-like narration of Devī's doings. Especially the kings that are engaged in *dharma*, in earning wealth and enjoyments, ought to hear Her story.

O Muni! When the liberated souls drink the nectar-like doings of the Devī, what doubt can there be with the ordinary human beings, to listen with rapt devotion those wondrous things! O Best of Munis! Those who have in their present births become possessed of rich enjoyments, it is inferred they worshipped the Goddess Bhavānī in their previous births with beautiful Kunda flowers, Champaka flowers and Bel leaves. And those who obtained a human body in the land of Bhārata in the present birth but are without grains and riches, diseased and void of any issues, are devoid of any devotion and did not worship the Mother Goddess. Wandering always as servants, carrying out orders and bearing burdensome loads, day and night they seek for their own selfish ends, yet they cannot get their belly-full

meals. The blind, deaf and dumb; lame and lepers suffer pain and misery in this earth; seeing them, it should be inferred that they never worshipped the Goddess Bhavānī. And those who are wealthy, prosperous, attended by numerous attendants and are always enjoying like kings, it is to be inferred that they certainly worshipped the lotus feet of the Mother Goddess in their past lives.

12-15. Therefore, O Son of Satyavatī! As you are kind-hearted, kindly narrate before me the excellent deeds of the Devī. O best of Munis! Where did the Goddess, Mahā-Lakṣmī, created out of the energies of all the gods, depart after She had slain the Mahiṣāsura and had been worshipped and praised by the Devas? O highly fortunate one! You told me that She vanished from the sight of the Devas; now I would like to know where She is staying now, whether in the Heavens or in the Land of Mortals? Did She melt away then and there, did She asscend to Vaikuṇṭha or did She go to the mountain Sumeru? O Muni! Narrate all these duly before me."

16-50. Vyāsa said: "O King! I told you before about the beautiful Maṇi Dvīpa; that island is the place of sport to the Devī and very dear to Her. In that place Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahādeva were transformed into females; they afterwards became males and were engaged in their respective duties. That place is grandly splendid and is in the center of the Ocean of Nectar. The Devī Ambikā assumes various forms there as She likes, and sports there. To that Maṇi Dvīpa the auspicious Devī departed after She had been praised by the Gods, to that place where sports always the eternal Bhagavatī Bhuvaneśvarī, the incarnate of Parabrahman.

When the Highest Goddess vanished, the Devas installed the powerful King Śatrughna, endowed with all auspicious qualities, the Lord of Ayodhyā descended from the Solar line, on the throne of Mahiṣāsura. After making him thus the King, Indra and the other Devas went to their respective abodes on their own conveyances. O King! The Devas having gone to their places, the subjects were governed on this earth according to *dharma*, and passed their times in ease and comfort. It used to rain, then,

timely and the earth was covered with plenty of grains and wealth; the trees were all filled with fruits and leaves and gave enjoyment to people. The cows with their udders full like earthen pots gave such a profuse quantity of milk that men began to milk them whenever they liked. The rivers' waters were all clear and cooling; and they flowed full in regular channels; the birds grouped round them. The Brāhmaṇas versed in the *Vedas* were engaged in performing sacrifices; the Kṣatriyas observed their virtues and were engaged in doing charities and in education; the kings held their rods of justice and were engaged in governing their subjects; though the several kings were busy with various arms and weapons, they all became fond of peace. Thus no wars nor quarrels were seen amongst the subjects; and the mines yielded plenty of wealth to the people.

O best of Kings! There were many Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras who became the devotees of the Goddess. The Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas used then to perform so many sacrifices that, at every nook and corner in this globe, the sacrificial altars and the sacrificial posts became visible. The female sex became gentle and of good behavior, truthful and chaste towards their respective husbands. Atheism and unrighteous acts vanished entirely from the face of the earth; the people left all dry discussions; they argued only about the *śāstras* that did not go in contra-distinction to the *Vedas*. Nobody liked to quarrel with each other; poverty, and evil inclinations were checked; the people everywhere lived in happiness. Untimely death was not there; so the people had no bereavements with their friends; no distress was seen. Famine, want of rains and deadly plagues were out of sight. The people had no illness even; and jealousies and quarrels vanished.

O King! all men and women began to sport merrily everywhere like the Gods in Heaven. Theft, atheism, deceit, vanity, hypocrisy, lustfulness, stupidity, and anti-Vedic feelings were not to be seen. O Lord of the Earth! All the men were then extremely devoted to their *dharma* and engaged in serving the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas were also, according to the three-fold plan of the creation, *sāttvik, rājasik* and *tāmasik*. The *sāttvik* Brāhmaṇas

were all versed in the *Vedas*, clever and truthful; they were kind, they controlled their passions and they did not accept presents from others. Filled with their ideas of *dharma*, they used to perform their *purodāsa* and other such sacrifices with *sāttvik* rice, etc., but never, never did they immolate any animals. O King! The *sāttvik* Brāhmaṇas gave charity, studied the *Vedas* and offered sacrifices for themselves. These were their three ordained actions. They were busy in these.

O King! The *rājasik* Brāhmaṇas were versed in the *Vedas*, acted as priests to the Kṣatriyas and ate flesh as sanctioned by recognized rules. They were busy with their six duties. They offered sacrifices on their own behalf, assisted others in sacrifices, took gifts, made charities, studied and taught others the *Vedas*. The *tāmasik* Brāhmaṇas were angry, attached to worldly objects, and jealous. They studied very little of the *Vedas* and spent most of their time in serving the kings.

O King! Once Mahiṣāsura was killed, all the Brāhmaṇas were glad and began to practice *dharma* according to the *Vedas*, observed vows and made charities. The Kṣatriyas began to govern the subjects, the Vaiśyas carried on their trading business and the other tribes went on with their agriculture, preservation of the cows, and lending money on interest. Thus all men became vary glad on the death of Mahiṣa. Devoid of cares and anxieties, the subjects got much wealth! The cows were endowed with auspicious signs and gave plenty of milk, and the rivers flowed full of water. The trees looked splendid with abundance of fruits; men were without diseases: in short, people had no mental agony and neither too much or too little of rains; *śalavas*, mice, birds and sedition were not extant. O King! The beings died not prematurely; rather enjoyed incessantly their full health and possessed lots of riches; especially beings engaged in the Vedic *dharma*, served the lotus feet of Caṇḍīkā and thus spent their lives."

Here ends the Twentieth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the peace of the world in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXI—Śumbha and Niśumbha conquer the Heavens

1-6. Vyāsa said: "O King! I am describing to you that excellent pure life and activities of the Devī that destroy all the sins of all the beings and make them happy. In days of yore, there were two very powerful demons Śumbha and Niśumbha (literally, murder and his younger brother); they were two brothers, strong heroes and invulnerable to male persons. Those two wicked Asuras were surrounded with numerable Dānavas; they always tormented the Devas. Then the Goddess Ambikā, for the good of the Devas, killed Śumbha and Niśumbha with all their attendants in a very dreadful battle. In the battlefield the Devī killed their main assistants: Caṇḍa Muṇḍa, and the exceedingly terrible Rakta Vīja and Dhumralochana. When the Devī destroyed those Dānavas, the Devas became fearless; the Devas then went to the beautiful Sumeru mountain, praised Her and chanted hymns to Her."

7-8. Hearing the names of Śumbha and Niśumbha, Janamejaya asked: "O best of Munis! Who were those two Asuras? How came they to be most powerful? Who put them here? Why were they vulnerable to women only? Under whose *tapasyā* and under whose boon did they become so strong? And why did that great Devī kill them? Describe all these to me in detail."

9-20. Vyāsa said: "O King, I am describing to you that beautiful anecdote where the Devī's holy deeds are involved. Hear. This incident, full of all that is good, destroys all the hearers' sins and grants them all their desired ends. In days of yore, Śumbha and Niśumbha, the two fair and good-looking brothers came out of Pātāla to this earth. These two Asuras, when they grew to their manhood, performed severe asceticism in Puṣkara, the holy place of pilgrimage, the most purifying place in this world and they refused to eat rice and water. They became so very skilled in their *yoga* practices that they passed away in their one posture and seat one *ajuta*—10,000 years. Thus they performed very difficult *tapasyā*. Then the God Brahmā, the Grandsire of all, became pleased with their asceticism and appeared before them, riding on His vehicle the Swan. The Creator, seeing

them thus deeply merged in meditation, asked them to get up from that state and told them thus: 'I have become pleased with your asceticism. I fulfil the desires of all the *lokas;* I have now come to you, pleased to see you so very strong in your ascetic practices; better ask your desired boons from me; I will grant them to you.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the Grandsire's wards, Śumbha and Niśumbha got up from their meditation; concentrating their attention towards Him, circumambulated Him and bowed down to Him with their hearts full of reverence. The two Asuras were very weak, lean and thin by their hard *tapasyā* and they looked very humble. They fell down before Him like a piece of wood and began to speak in a sweet voice, choked by intense feelings. 'O Brahmā! O Deva of the Devas! O Thou, the Ocean of Mercy! O Destroyer of fear of the devotees! O Lord! If Thou art pleased then dost Thou grant us immortality. There is nothing in this world more fearful than death; we two have taken refuge unto Thee, being afraid of this death. O Thou, Ocean of mercy! O Creator of the world! O Lord of the Devas! O Universal Soul! Protect us from this fear due to the terrible Death.'

21-23. Brahmā said: 'Is this the boon that you ask? This is in every way against the Law of Nature; for no one in these three *lokas* can grant this boon to anybody. When one becomes born, one must die; and when one dies, one must be born again. This law is ordained in this world by the Supreme Creator of this Universe from time immemorial. Therefore all beings must die; there is no doubt about this. Better ask any other boon that you desire; I will grant that to you.'

24-27. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Hearing thus the words of Brahmā, the two Dānavas pondered over the matter, bowed down to the Prajāpati, the Lord of the Creation and said: 'O Merciful One! Grant us then so that we shall be invulnerable to any of the male of the Immortal Devas down to human beings and birds and deers; this is the boon that we ask. Where exists the woman so powerful as to kill us? We never fear any woman in all the three

lokas. O Lotus-born! We, the two brothers, want not to be killed by any male; the females are naturally weak therefore we need not fear them.'

28-58. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Hearing their words, the Grandsire Brahmā gladly granted them their desired boon and returned to His own abode. On Brahmā going away, the two Dānavas, too, returned to their own places. They then appointed the Muni Bhṛgu as their priest and began to worship him. Bhṛgu, the best of the Munis, then, on an auspicious day and when the star was benign, got a beautiful golden throne built and gave it to the king. Śumbha, being the eldest, was then installed on the auspicious throne as the king; the other brave and excellent demons began to assemble there quickly for serving him. The two great warriors Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, proud on account of their great strength came there with their large armies, chariots, horses, and elephants. Similarly the valiant warriors Dhumralochana, hearing that Śumbha had become their King, came there with his own army. There came up also at that time the great warrior Rakta Vīja, more powerful on account of his getting a boon, attended by his army of two *aksauhinīs* of soldiers.

O King! Hear why this Rakta Vīja became so very unconquerable; whenever this Asura was wounded by any weapon, if one drop of blood fell on the ground, at once would be created so many innumerable Asuras, resembling his wicked nature and with similar weapons in their hands. The Asuras born of this blood would have similar appearances, would be similar in strength and ready to fight at once when they were born. That great warrior, the great Demon Rakta Vīja was unconquerable in battle for this very reason and no being could now kill him. The other Asuras, when they heard that Śumbha had become their king, came up there with their armies consisting of four divisions of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry and began to serve him. The army of Śumbha and Niśumbha thus became countless; and they forcibly conquered and got possession of all the kingdoms that existed then on the surface of the earth.

Then Niśumbha, the destroyer of enemies, collected his army and marched up to the Heavens without any delay to conquer Indra, the Lord of Śachī. He fought very hard with all the Lokapālas on all sides when Indra struck him on his breast with His thunderbolt. Niśumbha fell unconscious on the ground with that blow when his soldiers, defeated in the battle, fled away on all sides. Śumbha, the destroyer of the enemies' forces, hearing the unconscious state of the younger brother, came up at once on the field and shot at the Devas with multitudes of arrows. The untiring Śumbha fought so violently that Indra and the other Devas and Lokapalas were defeated. Śumbha then took away, perforce, the position of Indra and captured the Celestial Tree and Heavenly milch cow that yielded all desires and other excellent things over which Indra used to reign. In fact, that high-souled Asura got the dominion of the three *lokas* and took away all those that were offered at the sacrifices. He became highly glad on getting the Nandana Garden and was extremely delighted when he drank the celestial nectar. He then defeated in battle Kuvera, the god of wealth and occupied his kingdom. He defeated the Moon, Sun, and Yama, the God of Death and occupied their positions. Surrounded by his army, Niśumbha dispossessed Varuṇa, Fire and Air of their kingdoms and began to reign in their stead. Thus deprived of their kingdoms, prosperity and wealth, the Devas left the Nandana Garden and fled out of terror to the caves of hills and mountains.

Thus deprived of all their rights, the Devas without any weapons, without any luster, without any home, and without anywhere to go, began to wander in lonely forests. O King! All the Immortals began to knock about in lonely gardens, mountain caves and rivers; and nowhere they found happiness; for happiness depends entirely unto the hands of Fate. O Lord of men! Even those fortunate souls who are powerful, wealthy and wise, meet at times with distress and poverty. O King! How marvellous are the ways and manners of Time! It makes kings and donors beggars; it renders the powerful, weak; literates, illiterates; and it makes great warriors into terrible cowards. O King! Vāsava performed one hundred horse-sacrifices and got the excellent Indra's position; but again he fell into extreme difficulties; thus runs the wheel of Time.

59. It is Time that bestows the gem of knowledge to a person and it is Time again that deprives that very same man of his wisdom and makes him a great sinner.

60-61. The Bhagavān Viṣṇu takes incarnations, under the control of Time, in several lower wombs as boar, etc., and Mahādeva carries on His body a garland of human skulls that are not even fit to be touched. When Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa and others suffer such painful things, then one need not wonder at the workings of the great inscrutable Time."

Here ends the Twenty-first Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the conquest of the Heavens by Śumbha and Niśumbha in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXII—the Devas Eulogise the Devī

1-7. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the Devas were all defeated, Śumbha began to govern all their kingdoms; thus one thousand years passed away. The Devas, on the other hand, deprived of their kingdoms, were all drowned in an ocean of cares and anxieties; at last they began to feel very much and were greatly afflicted. They asked with reverence their own *guru* Bṛhaspati, 'O *guru!* What are we to do now? O All-knowing! You are the greatest Muni; kindly say unto us if there be any means by which we can get rid of this our present crisis. There are thousands of Vedic *mantrams* that yield the desired results if they are worshipped with due rites and ceremonies, and if all the rules be observed thereof. O best of Munis! Many *yajñas* are mentioned in the *Vedas* that yield all the desired results. You know them all; so kindly perform those *yajñas*. Do all those ceremonies duly that are ordained in the *Vedas* for the killing of enemies; O Descendant of Āngirasa! You ought to perform as early as possible those sacrifices for magical purposes to destroy the Dānavas so that all our miseries come to an end.'

8-22. Bṛhaspati said: 'O Lord of the Suras! All the *mantras* mentioned in the *Vedas* yield the desired results, but subservient to the Great Destiny only;

they do not give results of themselves, but do so in obedience to the laws ordained by Nature. You all are the presiding Deities of the Vedic *mantras;* but now, by the strange irony of Time, you are put to difficulties and troubles; what can I do now in this case? See! Indra, Agṇi, Varuṇa and other gods are invoked in sacrifices; howthen can sacrificial ceremonies do good, when you are put to so great difficulties. Therefore there is no remedy to sufferings which will take place unavoidably; but those who are wise declare that in such cases means are to be adopted. Some sages say that Fate is strong, but those who advocate the cause of taking remedial means say that Fate is powerless; remedies or manly exertions lead to all success. But, O King of the Devas! The embodied souls ought to resort to both Fate and Remedies; it is never advisable to depend solely on Fate.

Therefore, it is advisable to think out again and again as far as one's own Intellect goes, the best remedies. O Devas! I have thought over again and again on this subject and say to you my opinion. Please hear. In days of yore, the Bhagavatī, being appeased, killed Mahiṣāsura; and when you all praised and chanted hymns to Her, She gave you this boon that She will remove all your sorrows and troubles no sooner than you remember Her, and She told that you all must remember Her whenever any difficulty would arise to you out of this Great Destiny. She would then free you all of your ocean of great difficulties. Therefore do you all now go to the highly sacred and exquisitely beautiful Himālayan mountains and worship the most worshipful Caṇḍīkā Devī with love and devotion. Know all the rules of the seed-*mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ-bīja*) and be engaged in taking Her name accompanied with burnt offerings. I have come to know, by *yogik* power, that She will be pleased with You. I see that today your difficulties will come to an end; there is not the least doubt in this. I have heard that the Devī resides always in the Himāchal; if you worship and praise and chant hymns to Her, She will certainly grant you your desired boons. Therefore fully decide on this thing and go to the Himālayas. O Devas! She will fulfil all your desires and carry out all your intentions.'

23-24. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus his words, the Devas departed to the Himālayas, became all merged in the devotional worship of the Supreme Goddess and began to meditate constantly in their hearts the seed-*mantra* of Māyā (*hṛīṁ*). They bowed down to the Goddess Mahā-Māyā, the Discarder of all the fears of Her Bhaktas, and began to chant hymns to Her with perfect devotion.

25-42. 'O Goddess! Salutation to Thee! O Thou, the Lord of the Universe! the Lord of our hearts! Thou art the Everlasting Bliss and the Giver of bliss to the Devas! Salutation to Thee! Thou art the Destroyer of the Dānavas and Thou art the Giver of all desires of human beings. Thou canst be approached by devotion. Salutation to Thee! O Thou, the Incarnate of all the Devas! Thy names are endless, Thy forms are endless; none can count them. Thou residest always as the Force Incarnate in all the actions in the Creation, Preservation and Dissolution of Beings. O Goddess! Thou art Memory, Constancy, Intelligence and Old Age. Thou art nourishment, contentment; Thou upholdest all; Thou art beauty, peace, good knowledge, prosperity and happiness; Thou art the Goal (*mokṣa*), fame and intellect, and Thou art the Eternal unmanifested Seed.

We now bow down to those forms of Thine through which Thou dost serve the purpose of the Devas in this world as we are now in need of peace. Thou art forgiveness and mercy; Thou art the *yoga-nidrā* (the fourth state of consciousness, *turīya*); Thou art kindness, and Thou residest in all the beings in so many forms, great and grand, and so very celebrated; O Goddess! Thou hadst already served the cause of the gods in killing our great enemy Mahiṣāsura, puffed up with vanity. Therefore Thy mercy is well known amongst the gods; what's more, Thy mercy is known since very ancient times and narrated in the *Vedas*. What wonder is there that a mother nourishes gladly her own sons and preserves them carefully? For Thou art the Mother of the Devas; Thou art the great source of help to them; therefore dost Thou fulfill all their desires with Thine whole heart. O Devī! We do not know the limit of Thy qualities nor of Thy forms; O Goddess! Thou art worshipped by the whole Universe. Thou art fully

competent to save all from dangers; we are objects of Thy pity; dost Thou save us from our present troubles! Thou art capable to kill enemies without shooting any arrrows, without striking any blows, without hurling any trident, axes, *śaktis*, clubs or any other weapons; merely by Thy mere will Thou canst kill; still for sport and for the good of all beings Thou incarnatest and fightest for the sake of *līlā*. The ignorant persons know such things as birth, death, etc., that this world is not eternal; that no actions can be without any cause; we therefore ascertain by reasoning and inference that Thou art the Supreme Cause of this whole Universe. Brahmā is the Creator, Viṣṇu is the Preserver, and Maheśa is the Destroyer; so it is related in the *Purāṇas*. Thou again hast given birth to these three Gods in the respective cycles; therefore Thou art the Mother of all; there is no doubt about this.

O Devī! In days of yore, these three Devas worshipped Thee; Thou wert pleased and gavest them all the best powers. Being thus endowed with Thy powers, they have been able to create, preserve and destroy this Universe beautifully. Art they not foolish, though they be *yatis* (persons of self-controlled nature), who do not worship the Universal Mother, the Consciousness Incarnate, the Giver of liberation, Whose feet are worshipped by the Devas, and by worshipping Whom one gets the fruits of all one's desires? Certainly those Vaiṣṇavas, Sauras (worshippers of the Sun) and Paśupatas (worshippers of Śiva) are foolish braggarts who do not meditate Thee as the embodiment of Kamalā (prosperity), modesty, beauty, continuancy, Fame, nourishment. O Mother! The Asuras, Hari, Hara and other great Devas worship Thee in this world; therefore those mortals are certainly deceived by their Creator that do not worship Thee on the surface of this earth.

O Devī! Hari himself serves the lotus feet of Lakṣmī by coloring Her toes red with lac juice; Hara is very anxious to serve the lotus feet and take the dust thereof of Parvatī; Lakṣmī and Parvatī are but Thy part manifestations; therefore to serve them is, in other words, to serve Thee. What to speak of other persons, even those who can discriminate between real and unreal

and those who have left their worldly homes and have become dispassionate towards worldly objects, even those Munis worship forgiveness and mercy, that are but Thy parts; therefore who is there in this world that does not serve Thy lotus-feet!

O Devī! Those human beings who do not serve Thy lotus feet plunge into the dreadful wells of this *saṁsāra*, the round of birth and death, and are deprived of all pleasures. What more can be said than the fact that those fallen beings suffer terribly from poverty, humility, leprosy, headache and chronic enlargement of the spleen. O Mother! Those persons are void of any wealth and wife; they are the carriers of loads of wood, collect grass and leaves and show their skill in such acts; they are of little understanding and never they served Thy lotus-feet in their previous births. This we have come to know very well within our heart of hearts.'

43-47. Vyāsa said: "O King! When all the Devas thus eulogised, instantly the Devī Ambikā full of youth and beauty appeared there out of mercy. That extraordinary beautiful Bhagavatī, endowed with all auspicious signs and adorned with the Divine clothing, ornaments, garlands and sandal paste, etc., appeared before the Devas. Before Whom even the world enchanter Cupid bows down; with such beautiful Divine appearance, the Devī emerged from the mountain cave in order to take Her ablutions in the Ganges. That Devī, sweet-voiced like a cuckoo, gladly smiling began to speak to the Devas, singing hymns to Her, in a voice deep like that of a rumbling cloud.

48. The Devī said: 'O Best of Suras! Whom are you praising constantly in this place? What do you want? Why are you so anxious and seem to be so much careworn? Do please tell all this to Me in detail.'

49. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devas were first enchanted by Her beauty and softness; then, being encouraged by Her sweet words, began to speak with great joy.

50-57. ‘O Devī! We pray to Thee, O Lord of his Universe! We bow down to Thee. O Thou, the Ocean of mercy! Protect us from all our troubles; we are very much careworn and tormented by the Daityas. O Great Goddess! In ancient times Thou didst kill Mahiṣāsura, the source of troubles to all, and then told us to remember Thee whenever any difficulty would arise. Then Thou wouldst undoubtedly remove all the troubles arising from the Daityas no sooner than we remember Thee.

O Devī! We have now remembered Thee for that very reason. At present the two dreadful Asuras, Śumbha and Niśumbha have sprang up and are creating great disturbances; and they cannot be killed by any male beings. The powerful Raktavīja, Caṇḍa Muṇḍa and other Asuras united have dispossessed the Devas of their Heavens. Thou alone art our goal and refuge; without Thee there is none other to save us. Therefore, O Beautiful One! Thou dost do this work for the Devas who are extremely troubled and distressed. O Powerful Devī! We Devas are always at the service of Thy lotus feet; still the very powerful Dānavas are throwing us into dangers; O Mother! Thou art the Preserver of the distressed; therefore dost Thou preserve the Devas, devoted to Thee. O Mother! The Dānavas, being very much emboldened by their powers, are creating havoc on the surface of the Earth; now remembering that, in the beginning of the *yugas*, Thou didst create all this Universe, Thou dost now ought to protect all this Universe.’

Here ends the Twenty-second Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the eulogising of the Devī by the Devas in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIII—the Prowess of Kauśikī

1-7. Vyāsa said: “O King! When the tormented Devas praised thus, the Devī created from Her body another supremely beautiful form. This created form, Ambikā Devī, became known in all the worlds as Kauśikī, as She came out of the physical sheath of the Devī Parvatī. When Kauśikī was created out of the body of Parvatī, Parvatī’s body became transformed and

turned out into a black color and became known as Kālikā. Her terrible black appearance, when beheld, increases the terror even of the Daityas. O King! This Devī is now become known in this world as Kālarātri, the night of destruction at the end of the world, identified with Durgā, the Fulfiller of all desires. Ambikā Devī, then, began to look splendid, decked with various ornaments; Her beautiful form began to look very lovely. The Devī Ambikā then smiled a little and said, 'Better be fearless; I will slay just now your enemies. It is My incumbent duty to carry out your purposes; I will therefore slay in battle Niśumbha and others for the sake of your happiness.'

8-30. Thus saying, the Devī Bhagavatī, elated with pride, mounted on a Lion and, taking Kālikā with Her, entered into the city of Śumbha, the enemy of the gods. Ambikā went to a garden adjoining the city accompanied by Kālikā, and began to sing in such a sweet melodious tune that enchants even the God of Love, who fascinates the whole world. What more can be said than the fact that, hearing that sweet melodious song, the birds and beasts became enchanted; the Devas then began to feel much pleasure from the sky. In the meanwhile Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the two dreadful Asuras and attendants of Śumbha, came out accidentally there on their sportive excursions and saw the beautiful Ambikā Devī singing and Kālikā Devī sitting before Her. O best of Kings! No sooner Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa saw the extraordinary beauty of the Goddess Bhagavatī, than they went at once to Śumbha.

On approaching the lord of the Daityas sitting in his room, they bowed down and told thus in a sweet voice: 'O King! Here has come from the Himālayas a woman accidentally, mounted on a Lion; Her limbs are shining with all good signs, so much so that even the God of love would be enchanted by Her sight. Nowhere in the Devalokas, the Gandharvalokas or in this earth can be found such a beautiful lady; we never saw nor heard about such a lady before. O King! That lady is singing so beautifully and pleasingly to all that even the deer are standing motionless by Her side, enchanted by Her melodious voice. O King! That Lady is fit for you;

therefore determine first whose daughter is this lady, what for she has come there and then marry Her. Know this as certain that such a beautiful lady is not to be found anywhere in this world. Therefore do you bring Her to your house and marry Her.

O Lord of men! You have acquired all the gems and jewels of the Devas; why not then accept this gem in the form of a lady? O King! You have taken by force the exquisitely beautiful Airāvata elephant of Indra, the Pārijāta Tree, the seven faced horse Uccaiśravā, and many other jewels. You have acquired by your might the Prince of Jewels, the celestial car of the Creator Brahmā, ensigned by the emblematic Swan. You have dispossessed Kuvera of his treasure of the value of a *padma* (one thousand billion) and Varuṇa, the God of oceans, of his white umbrella. O King! When Varuṇa was defeated, your brother Niśumbha took perforce his *pāśa* weapon. O King! The Great Ocean gave you, out of terror, various jewels and honored you by presenting a garland of lotuses which never fade away. What more can be said than the fact that you have conquered Death and took away His force, and that you have easily conquered Yama, the God of Death and have taken from Him His horrible staff. O King! You have brought that Heavenly cow which came out when the ocean was churned; that cow is still with you; what more to say than that Menakā and other Apsarās are under your control. Thus you have got by your strength all the jewels. Why then are you not taking this exquisitely beautiful lady, the Prince of Jewels, amongst women? O King! All the jewels in your house will serve their real purpose, no doubt, then and then only when they will shine with this queen of jewels, this Lady. O Lord of the Daityas! There cannot be seen in all the *trilokas* such a beautiful Lady as this that I have now described before you. Therefore bring this beautiful Lady quickly and accept Her as your wife.'

31-35. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the sweet words of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, Śumbha spoke gladly to Sugrīva who was close by: 'Go, Sugrīva, do my messenger's work; you are well skilled in these things. Speak so that the beautiful Lady of thin waist may come over to me. Those who are well

versed in the science of amorous love declare that only two methods are to be adopted by the clever persons towards the female sex: conciliation and gentle words, and gifts and presents. For if the policy of division or sowing dissensions be applied, then hypocrisy is shown and that means the improper manifestation of love sentiment; whereas if chastisement be applied then the love sentiment becomes interrupted. Therefore, the wise have condemned these as corrupt means. O messenger! Where is that woman who does not come round excited with passion when good and sweet words are spoken to her in accordance with the *śama* and *dāna* methods?'

36-37. Vyāsa said: "Sugrīva, hearing the nice skilled words of Śumbha went hurriedly to the spot where existed the Mother of the Universe. He saw the fair Lady mounted on a lion, saluted Her and spoke gently and sweetly as follows.

38-49. The messenger said: 'O Beautiful One! Śumbha, the enemy of the Gods and the King of all, is beautiful in all respects, the ruler of the three *lokas*, a great hero and conqueror of all. Hearing of Your beauty and loveliness, that high-souled monarch is so much attached to you and has become so very passionate that he has sent me to you to express his views. O One of delicate limbs! Please hear what that Lord of the Daityas has spoken to Thee, after duly saluting Thee, words full of love and affection towards Thee: "O Beloved! I have defeated all the Devas and have thus become the Lord of the three worlds; specially I partake of all the offerings made in sacrificial acts and ceremonies, without moving away from my house. I have taken away all the gems, jewels and wealth that belonged to the Devas; consequently the abode of the Gods has become now worthless, on account of all its jewels being carried sway. O fair One! I am now enjoying all the jewels that exist in the *trilokas;* so much so that all the Devas, Asuras, and human beings pass away their times subservient to Me. But no sooner Thy qualifications reached my ears, Thou hast penetrated into my heart and has made me completely subservient to Thee; O fair One! What am I to do now? Whatever Thou commandest, I am ready to do

that; verily I am now Thy servant; so Thou oughtest to save me from the darts of passion. O One having swan-like eyes! I am verily made your captive. Specially I am extremely agitated by the arrows of Cupid; therefore dost Thou serve me when Thou wilt be made the Lord of the three worlds and thus enjoy the incomparably excellent things. O Beloved! I will remain ever Thy obedient servant up to the last moment of death. O Excellent One! I cannot ever be killed by the Devas, Asuras and human beings. O Fair faced One! Thou wilt be always prosperous and fortunate. Thou wilt be able to sport anywhere Thou likest. O Devī! Please ponder over the above words of the Lord of the Daityas in Thy heart and speak out Thy views gladly and with the same sweetness in reply; O Brisk One! I will go immediately to Śumbha and inform him about Thy mind".'

50. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devī, ready to serve the cause of the Gods, heard the messenger's gentle words and replied smiling and sweetly.

51-66. Śrī Devī spoke: 'I know fully well Śumbha and Niśumbha; the King Śumbha is very powerful, the conqueror of all the Devas and the destroyer of enemies. He is the repository of all good qualities, the enjoyer of all pleasures, very valorous, charitable and is beautiful, in fact a second Cupid. He is adorned with thirty-two auspicious signs; particularly he is a hero and cannot be killed by the Devas or human beings. O Messenger! Knowing this I have come here to have a look of that great warrior Śumbha. The jewel comes in contact with gold to increase its luster; so I have come here from afar to see my husband. On seeing all the Devas, Gandharvas, Rākṣasas and the eminent beautiful persons on the earth, I have come to know that they are all terror-stricken, almost unconscious, and shudder at the name of Śumbha. So, on hearing about his abilities, I have now come here to see him. O Messenger! O Fortunate One! Better now go back to the great hero Śumbha and speak to him in private the following sweet words of Mine: "That you are foremost amongst the powerful; most beautiful of the beautifuls, skilled in all the branches of learning, well qualified, charitable, clever, born of a high noble family, energetic and conqueror of the Devas; especially, by the sheer force of your

arms, you are so much exalted and you now enjoy all their gems and jewels. Therefore, O King! knowing your qualifications, I have come truly of my own accord to your city with the desire of getting for Me a husband. O High-souled One! I am fit for your consort. O Lord of the Daityas! There is a slight hitch in My marriage. It is this: In my early days while I was playing with My comrades, I promised before them privately partly out of childishness and partly out of vanity for bodily strength that I will certainly marry that hero who is powerful like Me and who will defeat Me in battle, thus testing his powers and weaknesses. My comrades laughed at my words and spoke with wonder, "Why has this girl made such an extraordinarily difficult promise?" Therefore, O Monarch! Better marry Me and fulfil My desires after knowing My strength and defeating Me in a battle. O Beautiful One in all respects! Better come yourself or your younger brother Niśumbha and perform the marriage ceremony after defeating Me in the battlefield.'

Here ends the Twenty-third Chapter in the Fifth Skandha on the prowess of Kauśikī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIV—Dhūmralochana gives the news

1-12. Vyāsa said: "O King! The messenger was thunderstruck with Devī's words and said: 'O Beautiful Lady! What art Thou speaking? It seems that Thou dost not think on this matter, owing to Thy feminine nature. O Devī! Thou art boasting in vain; how canst Thou expect to conquer Śumbha in a battle when he has conquered Indra and other Devas and many other Dānavas? Lotus-eyed One! There is no hero in the three worlds that can conquer Śumbha in battle; Thou seemest to be a mere trifle before that King of Demons in a face-to-face fight. O fair One! Nowhere ought to be said any words without being thought over; one must weigh one's own and other's might and then speak accordingly. The King Śumbha, the Lord of the three worlds, enchanted by Thy fascinating beauty, is desirous of Thee; therefore

dost Thou fulfill his desires and become his beloved wife. Thou better now abandonest Thy illiterate nature and worhippest Śumbha or Niśumbha; I am speaking for Thy good; so keep my words. The amorous love sentiment is the best of nine prevailing sentiments. Therefore every intelligent being ought to cherish with gladness this amorous feeling. And if Thou, O weak Girl! dost not go to Śumbha, then that Lord of the Earth will become very angry and will order his servants to take Thee perforce before him. O Fair One! Those proud Demons will drag Thee by Thy hair before Śumbha; there is no doubt about this. O thin-bodied One! Better forego Thy boldness in every way and keep Thy self-respect. Thou art the object of respect and admiration, and so should go before him. What difference is there between the fight which makes one's body liable to cuts and wounds by sharp arrows and pleasures that arise out of sexual intercourse! These are like the two opposite poles; therefore judge what is useless and what is useful and keep my good advice. Thou shalt be exceedingly happy if Thou servest Śumbha or Niśumbha.'

13-19. The Devī spoke: 'O Messenger! You are fortunate; you are well trained to speak out truth; I know full well that Śumbha and Niśumbha are strong. Still out of My childish nature, the promise that I made before I cannot undo it. Therefore speak to the powerful Śumbha or Niśumbha that none can be my husband simply from his beauty; without defeating Me in battle no one can marry Me. So conquer Me soon and marry Me as you like. Though of a weaker sex, I have come here to fight; know this as certain. Therefore if you be capable, fight and do the duty of a warrior. And if you be terrified by seeing My trident or if you want your life, quit the Heavens and this earth and go down to Pātāla without any delay. O Messenger! Go just now to your master and tell him sweetly these words. Then that powerful Lord of the Dānavas will judge what ought to be done. O Knower of *dharma!* To speak out truth before an enemy, before one's own master is certainly the duty of a messenger in this world; therefore go quickly and tell him what is verily true.'

20-21. Vyāsa said: "O King! The messenger was quite surprised to hear the bold words of the Devī, full of reason and morals, puffed up by the vanity of Her strength and departed. Coming to the Lord of the Daityas, the messenger bowed down before his feet and told him sweet words, full of morals, in a very humble way after pondering over and over again what he would say.

22-29. The messenger said: 'O King! Words, true and the same time sweet, ought to be spoken before one's master; but these are very rare in this world. On the other hand, if unpleasant words be spoken, the King gets very angry. So I am very anxious now. O King! Whether that lady is weak or strong, whence has She come, whose wife is She, I have not been able to ascertain all these. How then can I say about Her conduct? But, on seeing that harsh-speaking woman, I have come to understand this much that She is exceedingly haughty and has come to fight. O King! You are very intelligent; therefore judge what ought to be done after hearing only what that lady has told me to speak to you. That Lady said: "In days of childhood, while I was playing, out of my childish nature, I promised before my comrades that I would marry that valiant warrior who would defeat me thoroughly in a battle and thus curb My pride. O best of kings! You are religious; so you ought not make My word turn out false. Bring Me under your control by defeating Me in a battle." O King! Hearing these words I have returned; now do whatever you like. That Lady is determined to fight and is waiting there, firmly mounted on a Lion, and with various weapons in Her hands. Now judge and do what is best.'

30. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of Sugrīva, the king Śumbha asked his hero brother Niśumbha who was close by:

31-32. 'O Brother! You are intelligent; speak out truly what ought to be done now. The lovely woman is challenging us to fight. Shall I go to fight or you would go with forces? I will do whatever you say.'

33-34. Niśumbha said: 'O King! It is not proper that you or I would go to the battlefield. Better send Dhūmralochana to the field quickly. Let that

hero go there and defeat that beautiful Lady and bring Her here. You can then marry Her.'

35. Vyāsa said: 'Hearing thus his younger brother's words, Śumbha filled with anger, instantly sent Dhūmralochana who was close by to battle.

36-40. Śumbha said: 'O Dhūmralochana! Take a vast army and go at once to the battlefield and bring that stupid Lady, vainly boasting of Her strength. If any Deva, Dānava or any other powerful human being take Her side, kill him instantly. Slay Her companion the Goddess Kālikā and bring Her too. Do all these responsible duties and return quickly. That chaste Lady is to be protected by all means. The body of that thin Lady is very delicate; so shoot arrows at Her very carefully and see that they are not sharp. But kill those that will help Her with weapons in their hands. Try your best to protect Her, never to kill Her.'

41-60. Vyāsa said: 'O King! No sooner ordered thus by the king, Dhūmralochana bowed down to the king, and, accompanied by sixty thousand Dānava forces, quickly went to the battlefield and saw there that the Lady was sitting in a beautiful garden. Seeing that deer-eyed Lady, Dhūmralochana began to address Her with great humility and in sweet words full of reason and goodness: 'O Devī! O highly fortunate One! Hear! Śumbha is very much distressed owing to Thy absence. Lest there be any break in the love sentiments, that King, a wise statesman, sent a messenger with instructions to address Thee in sweet and suitable terms; but, O fair One! that messenger, on arriving before the King had told all the contrary words. O Knower of love sentiments! Hearing thus the messenger's words, my lord Śumbha, sick with love, has become immersed in cares and anxieties. That messenger had not been able to realize the true meaning of Thy words. O honorable Lady! The sentence uttered by Thee, "He who will conquer me in battle" is full of deep meanings; he was stupid; hence he could not realize the meaning of the word "battle" intended by Thee. O Beautiful One! "Battle" means two different things according to persons for whom it is intended; it is of two kinds: One out of excitement and another

out of sexual intercourse. With Thee, the sexual intercourse is intended; and with any other enemy, excitement in a real fight is meant. Out of these, the fight of sexual intercourse is full of sweetness and the fight with enemies is painful. O beautiful One! I know Thy intentions fully. In Thy heart reigns that fight of sexual intercourse. Knowing me as expert in these affairs, the king Śumbha has sent me today to Thee with a vast army. O highly fortunate Lady! Thou art clever and shrewd; hear my gentle words; serve Śumbha, the lord of the three worlds, the destroyer of the Devas' pride. Thou wilt be the dearest queen-consort and enjoy the best pleasures. The powerful Śumbha knows the real meaning of the fight of sexual intercourse; so he will easily conquer Thee. When Thou wilt show various amorous gestures, he will also show his feelings. And the Kālikā Devī, your companion will remain with Thee as a helping mate in your vital pleasures. The lord of the Daityas, expert in the science of love, will certainly conquer Thee engaged in amorous fight and will lay Thee stretched on a soft bedding and will make Thee tired; he will make Thy body covered with blood by striking with nails and he will bite Thy lips to pieces; then Thou wilt perspire profusely and wilt cease fighting. Thus Thy mental desire for fight—sexual intercourse—will be satisfied. O Beloved! At Thy mere sight Śumbha will be completely subject to Thee. Therefore dost Thou keep my sweet and beneficial words. Thou art an honorable Lady; and Thou wilt be highly honored by all if Thou marryest Śumbha. Those are certainly very unfortunate who like fighting with weapons. O Beloved! Sexual intercourse is always favorite to Thee; therefore it is not worthy of Thee to fight with weapons. Therefore dost Thou make the king free of sorrows by pouring on him Thy mouth nectar and by making his heart bud forth by Thy kicking, as Bakula and Kurubaka trees blossom forth when drenched with mouth nectar and Asoka tree gets blossomed by the kicking of women.'

Here ends the Twenty-fourth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the description and Dhūmralochana giving the news in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

ChapterXXV—the killing of Dhūmralochana

1-7. Vyāsa said: "O Janamejaya! When Dhūmralochana ceased speaking, the Devī Kālikā laughed wildly and began to speak sweetly thus: 'O stupid! Skilled in flattery, you know only how to use jugglery of words like an actor; do you think that your ends will be served if you speak only sweet words? This can never be. O stupid! Fight now; there is no need of useless words. You are strong and have been sent by that wicked Demon with a great army. This Devī, out of wrath, will kill you, Śumbha, and Niśumbha and other commanders by Her arrows and will then return to Her abode. Where is that stupid Śumbha? And who is this Devī, the great Enchantress of the Universe? Their marriage in this world is entirely out of question and can never take place. O stupid! What do you think that a lioness becoming very passionate, would make an ordinary jackal her husband? or would a she-elephant prefer an ass? or would a heavenly Cow like a bison? Go to Śumbha and Niśumbha and tell truly to them: "Fight or go instantly to Pātāla."

8-10. Vyāsa said: "O fortunate One! The Demon Dhūmralochana, hearing thus the Kālikā's words, became very angry and spoke with reddened eyes: 'O Ugly One! I will slay Thee and this Lion infatuated with pride in battle, and take this fair One to the king. O Kālī! I have not been able to do this, simply it would break our amorous love sentiments. O quarrelsome One! Otherwise I would have undoubtedly slain Thee just now with my sharpened arrows tipped with iron."

11. Hearing thus, Kālikā said: 'O Fool! Why do you boast vainly? This is not the religion of heros with bows and arrows in their hands. Shoot your arrows with all your might; I will send you to the realm of Death.'

12-31. Vyāsa said: 'O King! Hearing the Devī's words, Dhūmralochana caught hold of his very strong bow and began to shoot arrows after arrows at Kālikā. Indra and the other Devas came out to see the fight on their best cars in the celestial space and shouted "Victory to the Devī!" and thus eulogised Her. Then a deadly fight ensued between them with arrows,

axes, clubs, *śaktis*, and Musalas and various other weapons. Kālikā cut off at the very outset all the asses that carried the chariot by Her arrows and next broke his chariot and began to laugh repeatedly. O Bhārata! Then Dhūmralochana becoming angry mounted on another chariot and began to shoot deadly arrows at Kālikā. Kālikā Devī, too, cut those arrows into pieces before they reached Her, and shot arrows after arrows at the Dānava in quick succession. Thousands of his soldiers near to him were killed; the asses and the charioteer were killed and the chariot was broken. She cut his arrows by Her swift serpent-like arrows and blew Her conchshell. The Devas seeing this became very glad. Dhūmralochana, seeing himself displaced from his chariot, took up with anger his very strong *parigha* weapon and came near to the chariot of the Devī. Then the Dānava, terrific like death, began to abuse the Devī and said: 'O ugly tawny-eyed Kālī! I will kill Thee just now.' Thus saying, he suddenly went near to Her and when he was about to throw his *parigha* weapon at Her, Ambikā Devī burnt him to ashes simply by Her loud shout of defiance. Seeing Dhūmralochana burnt to ashes, his soldiers became panic-stricken, and fled away immediately, crying aloud 'O Father! O Father!' The Devas saw this and gladly showered from high heaps of flowers on the Devī.

O King! The battleground then assumed a dreadful appearance; at some places the slain Dānavas; at others, the horses; at other places elephants and at some other places the asses lay scattered on the field. The herons, crows, vultures, the Piśāchas of the class Batabaraphas, jackals and other carnivorous animals, began to dance wildly and clamour hideously at the sight of the dead bodies lying on the field. Ambikā Devī then quitting the field, went to a distant place and blew Her conchshell so furiously and terribly that Śumbha heard that terrific noise while sitting in his own residence. At the next moment, he saw that the Dānava forces had retreated, and they were coming there crying. Some of them were besmeared with blood all over the bodies; some had got their feet, some their arms, cut asunder, some were devoid of eyes, some had got their backs broken; some had their waists broken; some got their necks broken and some were going on bedsteads. Seeing them thus, Śumbha and

Niśumbha asked them: 'Where is Dhūmralochana? Why have you all retreated? And why have you not brought that Lady? Where are the other forces? Who has blown this horrible conchshell? O Fools! Inform me quickly and truly all these things.'

32-33. The soldiers said: 'O King! Dhūmralochana has been slain by Kālikā; She has destroyed all the soldiers and has done extraordinary deeds. O King! Know the blowing of the conchshell that has caused terror in the hearts of the Dānavas and has enhanced the joy of the Devas and is being resounded in the celestial space, is that done by the Ambikā Devī.

34-45. O Lord! When the Devī broke the chariot of Dhūmralochana by the multitude of Her arrows, killed the horses and at last slew Dhūmralochana himself, when all the forces were slain by Her who appeared like a lion, and when the rest of the army retreated, the Devas seeing all these were very much gladdened and showered flowers from the celestial sky. O King! We have come to a perfect conclusion that we will not get the victory; now consult with your expert ministers and do what is needful. O King! The Supreme Goddess of the Universe is waiting there alone to fight with you without any help of any other forces; this is a great wonder to us. O King! Intoxicated with Her power, that Girl, fearless, is reigning there taking Her stand on the Lion. All these seem wonderful to us. O King! Consult with your councillors and out of the four policies peace, fight, retreat or remaining neutral, accept what is best. O tormentor of the foes! True! There are no forces with the Devī, but the whole host of the Devas will take up Her cause in crisis, there is no doubt. In due time, Hari and Hara both will come and assist Her; now the guardians of the several quarters, the Lokapālas are waiting by Her side in the celestial space. O tormentor of the Gods! Know that the Gandharvas, Kinnaras, and human beings all will come timely and help Her. O King! We guess all these. But that Lady does not want the assistance of anyone nor does She expect that any other would do the work for Her. You must know this certainly, that She alone can destroy this whole Universe. What to speak of the Dānavas only! O highly fortunate one! Knowing all these, do as you like. It is the duty of the

servants to speak beneficial and at the same time true words with moderation.'

46-51. Vyāsa said: "O King! Śumbha, the tormentor of others, hearing their words asked his younger brother in private: 'O Brother! This Kālikā has slain today Dhūmralochana with his forces; the few retreated and came over to me. Now the Ambikā Devī, puffed up with pride is blowing Her conchshell. Brother! The ways of Time are knowable even to the wise. The grass becomes a thunderbolt and the thunderbolt becomes like grass and powerless. Know thus the course of Destiny. O fortunate one! Now I ask you, what are we to do now? Are we to entertain yet the desire of enjoying Ambikā, or are we to fly away from here, or are we to fight on? Say quickly. Though younger, in times of difficulty, I consider you as my elder.'

52-54. Hearing thus the Śumbha's words, Niśumbha said: 'O sinless one! Flight or taking refuge in a fort is not reasonable. To fight with this Lady is the best course. I will take the best generals and soldiers with me, will slay that Lady and quickly return. And if Fate be strong and prove it otherwise, then after my death, think out again and again and do what is best.'

55-60. Hearing thus the younger brother's words, Śumbha said, 'You better wait; let Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa go to the battle, surrounded with forces. To kill a hare it is not necessary to send an elephant. This is a very trifling matter; the two great warriors Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa will freely be able to slay Her." Thus saying his younger brother, the King Śumbha addressed Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, who were waiting before him, thus: 'O Caṇḍa! O Muṇḍa! Take your forces and go quickly to kill that shameless Lady, puffed up with pride. O pair of warriors! Kill that tawny-eyed Kālikā in the battle and bring that Ambikā Devī here quickly. Do this great service. And if that haughty Ambikā be unwilling to come here, though taken as a captive, then kill that Durgā, the ornament of the battle, too, by sharp arrows.'

Here ends the Twenty-fifth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Dhūmralochana in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVI—the killing of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa

1-17. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus ordered, the two strong warriors Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa hurriedly went to the battlefield, accompanied by a vast army. There they saw the Devī, intent on doing good to the Gods. Then they began to address Her in conciliatory words: 'O Lady! Dost Thou not know that the extraordinarily strong Śumbha and Niśumbha, the lords of the Daityas, have crushed down the Devas and vanquished Indra and have become intoxicated with their victory? O fair One! Thou art alone! Only Kālikā and Thy Lion are with Thee! It is Thy foolishness that Thou art desirous to conquer Śumbha, who is endowed with all power. I think there is no adviser to Thee, man nor woman; the Devas have sent Thee here simply for Thy destruction. Think, O delicate One! over the powers of Thine as well as those of Thy enemy. Vainly dost Thou boast of Thy having eighteen hands. Before the great warrior Śumbha, the conqueror of the Devas, many hands and many weapons will be useless; they will prove mere burdens. So dost Thou fulfil what reigns in the heart of Śumbha, the destroyer of the legs and the uprooter of the teeth of Airāvata elephant. Vain is Thy boast, O Beloved! Follow my sweet words; they will do good to Thee, O large-eyed One! They will destroy Thy pains and give Thee bliss. Those actions that lead to pain are to be avoided by the wise; and those that bring in happiness are to be served by the Paṇḍitas, versed in the *śāstras*. O sweet-speaking one! Thou art clever. Look at the great strength of Śumbha with Thy eyes. He has enhanced his glory by crushing down the Devas. And if Thou thinkest the gods superior, that is false, for the wise men do not rely on the mere guess, full of doubts; they believe what they actually see. Śumbha, hard to be conquered in battles, is the great enemy of the Gods; they have been crushed down by him, and have therefore sent Thee here. O sweet-smiling One! Thou hast been deceived by their sweet words; they, prompted by their selfish ends, have sent Thee here simply to give Thee trouble. The friends that come with certain business and selfish ends are to be rejected. Friends out of religious motives are only to be sought for refuge. Verily I tell Thee that the gods are terribly selfish. Therefore dost Thou serve Śumbha, the conqueror of Indra and the lord of the three

worlds; he is a hero, beautiful, lovely, cunning and thoroughly expert in the science of amorous love. Thou wilt get the prosperity of all the worlds by the mere command of Śumbha; therefore make a firm resolve and serve that splendid husband Śumbha.'

18-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Universal Mother, hearing the words of Caṇḍa spoke with a voice deep as thunder: 'O Boor! Why do you use false deceitful words? Fly away just now. Why shall I make Śumbha my husband, disregarding Hari, Hara and the other Devas? O you, a veritable fool! I have no necessity for a lord; I have got nothing to do with any lord. I Myself am the Lord of all the beings; and I preserve this whole Universe with all the lords and beings therein. Note this. In ancient times I saw thousands and thousands of Śumbhas and Niśumbhas and I slew them all. I sent hundreds and hundreds of Daityas and Demons to the realm of Death. Before Me the hosts of Devas were destroyed in *yuga* after *yuga*. Today the Daityas again will go unto destruction. The time has come to destroy the Daityas; why then are you struggling in vain with your followers for your lives? Fight now and keep the *dharma* of the warriors! Death is inevitable; thinking thus, the high-souled ones should keep their name, fame, and respect. What business have you to do with Śumbha and Niśumbha? Follow the warrior's *dharma* and go to Heaven, the abode of the gods. Śumbha, Niśumbha and your other friends and followers, all will follow you and will come here no doubt. O stupid one! I will put an end to all the Dānavas today. Therefore cast aside your weakness and go on, fight. I will slay you and your brother just now; next I will kill the proud Rakta Vīja, Niśumbha, Śumbha and the other Dānavas in the battlefield and will then go to My desired place. Now remain here if you like or fly away quickly. You have been fed in vain because you fear to fight. What use is there now in using sweet words like a weak and distressed man? Well! Take up your arms now and fight.'

31-61. Vyāsa said: "O King! Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, elated with pride got excited at the Devī's words, became angry and made a violent noise with their bowstrings. The Devī, too, blew Her conchshell so loudly that the ten

quarters of the sky reverberated; in the meanwhile, the powerful Lion became very angry and roared loudly. Hearing that sound Indra and other Devas, the Munis, Yakṣas, Siddhas and Kinnaras became all very glad. A dreadful fight than ensued between Caṇḍīkā and Caṇḍa with arrows, axes and other weapons, causing terror to the weak. Then Caṇḍīkā Devī became very wrathful, cut to pieces all the arrows shot by Caṇḍa and then hurled serpent-like arrows at him. Then the sky over the battleground seemed to be overcast with arrows just as the clouds get covered over with locusts, dreadful to the cultivators. In the meanwhile Muṇḍa, exceedingly terrible, came up to the field; taking with him his army and becoming impatient with anger he began to shoot arrows. Seeing that multitude of arrows, Ambikā got very angry; out of Her frowning look, Her eyebrows became crooked, Her face became black, and Her eyes turned red like Kadalī flowers; at this time suddenly came out of Her forehead Kālī. Wearing the tiger's skin, cruel, covering Her body with elephant's skin, wearing a garland of skulls, terrible, with a belly like a dried-up well, mouth wide open, with a wide waist, lip hanging loosely, with axe, noose and Śiva's weapon in Her hands, She looked very terrible like the Night of Dissolution. She began to lick frequently, forcibly dashed into the Dānava army and began to destroy it. She angrily began to take the powerful Dānavas by Her arms and pouring them into Her mouth crushed them with Her teeth. Taking the elephants with bells by Her own power in Her hands, She put them all into Her mouth and swallowed them all with their riders and began to laugh hoarsely. Thus camels, horses and charioteers with chariots all She put into Her mouth and began to chew them all grimly. O King! Seeing that the forces were being thus destroyed, the two great warriors Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa began to shoot arrows after arrows without intermission and covered the Devī with them. Caṇḍa hurled a Sudarśana-like disc, lustrous like the Sun, with great force against the Devī, and frequently shouted thundering cries. Seeing him roaring and the lustrous disc coming towards Her like another sun, She shot at him arrows sharpened on stones so that the warrior Caṇḍa became overpowered by them and lay down senseless on the ground. The powerful Muṇḍa seeing his brother unconscious became very much distressed with grief; but he got

angry and began to shoot arrows immediately at the Devī. Caṇḍīkā Devī hurled the weapon named *īsikā* and thus cut off to pieces all the dreadful arrows of Muṇḍa in a moment, and shot an *ardha-candra* (semicircular) arrow at him. With this arrow the powerful Asura was deprived of his pride and made to lie down unconscious on the earth. Muṇḍa thus lying on the ground, a great uproar arose amidst the army of the Dānavas; and the Devas became delighted in the sky. In the meanwhile Caṇḍa became conscious and taking a very heavy club hurled it violently at the right hand of Kālikā. Kālikā rendered that blow useless and instantly tied down that Asura by Her *pāsa* weapon, purified by *mantras*. Muṇḍa again rose up, and, seeing his brother in that fastened condition, came to the front well-armored and with an exceedingly strong weapon called *śakti*. Seeing the Asura coming, She instantly fastened him down like his brother. Taking the powerful Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa like hares and laughing wildly, Kālī went to Ambikā, and said: 'I have brought the two beasts very auspicious as offerings in this sacrificial war. Kindly accept these.' Seeing the two Dānavas brought as if they were the two wolves, Ambikā told her sweetly: O Thou, fond of war! Thou art very wise; so dost not commit the act of envy nor dost leave them; think over the purport of My words and know that it is Thy duty to bring the Devī's work to a successful issue.'

62-65. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of Ambikā, Kālikā spoke to Her again: 'In this war-sacrifice there is this axe which is like a sacrificial post; I will offer these two as victims to Thy sacrifice. Thus no act of envy will be committed (i.e., killing in a sacrifice is not considered as envy).' Thus saying, the Kālikā Devī cut off their heads with great force and gladly drank their blood. Thus seeing the two Asuras killed, Ambikā said gladly: 'Thou hast done the service to the gods; so I will give Thee an excellent boon. O Kālikā! As Thou hast killed Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, henceforth Thou wilt be renowned in this world as Cāmuṇḍā.'

Here ends the Twenty-sixth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVII—the War of Raktabīja

1-14. Vyāsa said: "O King! Seeing the two Dānavas killed in the battle, the remnant soldiers all fled away back to Śumbha. Some of them were cut and wounded in many places by arrows, some had their arms severed, some were bleeding; thus they entered crying into the sky. On reaching the lord of the Daityas, they began to make frequently the noise indicative of danger and exclaimed, 'O King! Save us, save us; Kālikā is devouring everything today. The two great warriors Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the tormentors of the Devas, were slain by Her; all the soldiers were devoured by Her; we have fled away panic-stricken. O Lord! Kālikā has rendered the battlefield horrible by the dead bodies of elephants, horses, camels, warriors, and foot soldiers. A river of blood is flowing there of which the flesh of the soldiers is sufficient mud, their hairs are like aquatic plants, the broken chariot wheels are like whirlpools, the severed arms and feet are like fishes and their heads look like *tumbi* fruits (long gourds). O King! Save your line; go quickly to Pātāla. The Devī has become angry and will, no doubt, destroy our race. Even the Lion is eating away the Dānavas; and the Kālikā Devī is killing innumerable Dānavas by Her arrows. Therefore, O King! What intentions are you cherishing in your mind? Is it that you have desired to be merely slain with your younger brother Niśumbha? And what good purpose will this cruel woman, destroying your race serve, for Whose sake you have desired to kill all your friends? O King! Victory or defeat in this world are under Daīva (Fate). The wise never risk to meet with great difficulties for the gratification of an ordinary whim. O Lord! Look at the wonderful deeds of that Great Creator! What more wonder can there be than this that a woman alone killed all the Dānavas? O King! You have conquered by the help of your army all the Lokapālas, guardians of the quarters of the sky; but now that Lady, though alone and unsupported by anybody, is challenging you to fight.

15-24. O King! In ancient times, in the holy pilgrimage of Puṣkara, the sacred place of the Devas, you performed austerities when Brahmā, the Grandsire of all the worlds, came to you to grant a boon. Then you asked

the boon and wanted to become to be immortal. But when Brahmā refused to grant it you wanted from him and were granted that you would not be killed by any male being, be he a Deva, Dānava, a man, Nāga, Kinnara, Yakṣa, or any other person. O Lord! For that very reason we think now that this Lady has timely come to kill you. Think over it seriously and cease fighting. O King! This Devī is the great Mahā-Māyā, the Highest Prakṛti. It is She Who devours everything at the end of a *kalpa*. This auspicious Devī is the Creatrix of all the worlds and the Devas. She is the embodiment of the three qualities, endowed with all the powers. She is *tāmasi*, the Destructrix of the whole world. This Devī can never be conquered; Imperishable, Eternal, She is the *sandhyā* and the Refuge of the Devas. She is Gāyatrī, the Mother of the *Vedas*. She is All-knowing and always unmanifested. This Undecaying Lady is void of any *prākṛtic* attributes, though She at times possesses attributes. She is Success Incarnate and bestows success to all; She is Bliss Herself and gives bliss to all. This Gaurī bids all the Devas discard all their fears. She is *śuddha-sattva*. Thus knowing, O King! Quit thy inimical feelings to Her; seek refuge unto Her; the Devī would then certainly protect you. Be obedient to Her and save your race. Then the remnant Dānavas will be able to live for a very long time.'

25. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus, Śumbha, the conqueror of the Devas, told them truly in words becoming of a hero.

26-42. Śumbha said: 'O Fools! Hold your tongue.You have fled because your desire to live is very strong. So you better go to Pātāla without any delay. This world is under the control of Fate; so I need not think about victory. I am under this Fate just as Brahmā and other Devas are under it. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Yama, Agṇi, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Chandra and Indra are all under the sway of this Destiny. O Fools! Whatever is inevitable will certainly come to pass. What need I think over it then? The effort also comes to be of such a nature as will lead to that ordained by Fate. Thus thinking, the wise never grieve; especially the wise ones never leave their own *dharma* for fear of death. The happiness, pain, longevity, birth and

death of all the embodied souls are all determined by Fate when their proper time arrives. See! When the time is over, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahādeva the lord of Pārvatī die away; on the expiration of their terms of lives, Indra and other Devas go to destruction. Similarly I am also completely under the sway of time; so what doubt is there that I, too, will go to destruction when I have observed my own *dharma?* This Lady is challenging me to fight of Her own will; how can I fly away and live hundreds of years? I will fight today. Let the result come whatever it may. I will gladly take the victory or defeat, whatever the case may be. The learned approving of the cause of effort declare Fate as fictitious; those who realize their sayings know that they are full of reason. Without exertion no end can be achieved; weak persons depend on the destiny. Foolish persons say that Fate is strong; but the wise do not say so. There is no proof whether Fate exists or not; in fact what is called Fate is invisible; how can it then be seen? Has anybody seen Fate? It is simply a scare for the illiterate; a remedy only to console one's mind in times of distress. Simply proximity to a grindmill without any man's effort cannot grind a material. Therefore if exertion be made in proportion to the gravity of the work, success is sure to ensue; if exertion be made less in proportion, the work does not come to a successful issue. If time, place and one's enemieś forces be correctly taken into account and then if the proper attempts be made, success follows; thus Bṛhaspati has said.'

43-44. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus making a firm resolve to send the powerful Raktabīja to the battle with a vast army; Śumbha said: "O Raktabīja! You are a very powerful hero; therefore do you go to the battle. O Fortunate One! Fight as you are the strength of your forces.'

45-46. Raktabīja said: 'O King! You need not be a bit anxious for this work.Certainly I will either slay Her or I will bring Her under your control. Please see my skill in this warfare; that Lady, favorite of the gods, is worth nothing; I will just now conquer Her and make Her your slave.'

47-50. Vyāsa said: "O Best of Kurus! Thus saying, the powerful Raktabīja mounted on his chariot and went to the battle accompanied by his forces. The battalion consisted of cavalry, infantry, chariots and elephants. Thus surrounded he departed from the city for that Devī, seated on a mountaintop. Then the Devī, seeing him coming, blew Her conchshell; the Dānavas were terrified at that sound and the joy of the Devas increased. Hearing that sound Raktabīja came very hurriedly to Cāmuṇḍā and began to speak to Her sweetly.

51-62. 'O Girl! Do you think me weak and thus want to terrify me with the sound of a conchshell? O lean One! Have you taken me to be a Dhūmralochana? O sweet-speaking One! My name is Raktabīja; I have come here for Thy sake. If Thou desirest to fight, be prepared; I am not a bit afraid of that. O Dear! You saw those who were weak; I do not belong to that class. Therefore dost Thou fight as Thou likest and then Thou wilt be able to ascertain my strength. O Beautiful! If Thou didst serve the old persons before, if Thou hadst heard the science of politics and morals, if Thou hadst studied the political economy, joined the assemblage of the Paṇḍitas or if Thou hast been well versed in literature and *tantras*, then hear this my good counsel which will serve as a medicinal diet to Thee. Out of the nine sentiments, the *śringāra* (amorous love sentiments) and *śānti* (peace) are considered as the chief by the assemblage of the Paṇḍitas. Again out of these two, the love sentiment is the king. Drenched with this sentiment, Viṣṇu lives with Kamalā; the four-faced Brahmā lives with Sāvitri; Indra with Śachī and Śaṅkara resides with his wife Umā. The tree stands with creepers surrounding it, the deer lives with his female deer, the pigeon lives with the female pigeon; thus all the beings are very attached to this sentiment of remaining in couples. Those who cannot enjoy owing to certain disease or illness, are deprived by Fate of such enjoyments. Those who are ignorant of this love sentiment in couples, are deprived of it by the sweet jugglery of words of the cheat, and yet attached to the peace sentiment. When delusion, the destroyer of *buddhi*, common sense, occurs, when the violent indomitable anger, greed, and lust arise, where then is the

place for knowledge and dispassion? Therefore, O Auspicious One! Dost Thou marry the beautiful Śumbha or the powerful Niśumbha.'

63. Vyāsa said: 'O King! When Raktabīja spoke all these words, standing before the Devī Kālikā, Ambikā and Cāmuṇḍā began to laugh.

Here ends the Twenty-seventh Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the description of the war of Raktabīja in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXVIII—the Fighting of the Goddesses

1-5. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Devī, hearing thus, laughed and spoke the following reasonable words, in a voice deep as a rumbling cloud: 'O dull-brained one! Already I told to that messenger before in reply to you; why then do you boast in vain? If there be any such in the three worlds who can stand equal to Me in appearance, strength and prosperity, I will marry him. Go to Śumbha and Niśumbha and inform them that thus I promised before; therefore let any of them conquer Me in battle and then marry Me according to the prescribed rules. You have come here to execute the order of Śumbha; so either stand up and fight or fly to Pātāla with your King.'

6-11. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing the Devī's words, the Dānava was filled with anger and began to shoot dreadful arrows at once at the Lion. Ambikā, then ready-handed, seeing the multitude of arrows coming in the sky like serpents, cut them to pieces in a moment by Her sharp arrows. Then the Devī, drawing Her bow, shot arrows sharpened on stone at the great Asura Raktabīja. Then that wicked Demon, thus hit by the arrows, fell unconscious on the chariot. When he lay thus senseless, a great uproar arose amidst his army and the soldiers began to cry aloud saying, 'Alas! We all are killed.' Then Śumbha, the king of the Asuras, hearing the sound of *'Boombā!'* (a danger cry by hands and mouth) ordered all the Dānavas to be ready for battle.

12. Then Śumbha said: 'Let all Kāmbojas go to the battle with all their forces; let other powerful heroes, especially the Kālakeyās, too, who are very strong heroes, go up for the battle.'

13-33. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus ordered, all the fourfold army of Śumbha —cavalry, infantry, elephants and chariots—went out, intoxicated for war, to the battleground where the Devī stood. The Devī Caṇḍīkā, seeing the Dānava forces coming near, made at once terrible sounds frequently. The Ambikā Devī also made the sound with Her bowstring and blew Her conchshell. Kālī, then, shouted aloud, opening Her mouth widely. The Devī's powerful Lion *vāhana*, hearing the terrible sounds, roared so loudly that the Dānavas were struck with strange terror. The powerful Dānavas, then, hearing that sound became impatient with anger and shot arrows after arrows at the Devī. The wonderful horrible battle, then, ensued, causing horripilation and the *śaktis* of Brahmā and the other Devas began to come to Caṇḍīkā Devī. The Devīs, the wives of the several Devas, then went to the battlefield in their respective forms with ornaments and *vāhanas* as generally on such occasions. The *śakti* (wife) of Brahmā named Brahmāni, mounting on the back of Her Swan came there with a string of beads and *kamaṇḍalu* (an wooden waterpot used by ascetics). Vaisnavī with Her yellow robes came there mounted on Garuḍa the sacred bird of Viṣṇu with conch, discus, club and lotus in Her hands. The Devī Śankarī, the wife of Śiva, the Auspicious One, arrived on the back of Her Bull. The emblem of half-moon was on Her forehead while in Her hands She held snake, *mālā* and trident (*trisūla*) the sign of fearlessness for Her devotees. The beautiful wife of Kārtika, Kaumārī Devī, looking like Kartika, came to fight there mounted on a peacock. The fairfaced Indrānī, decked with ornaments on Her several limbs, came there to fight with thunderbolt in Her hand, mounted on the elephant Airāvata. The Vārāhī Devī looking like a female boar came also, seated on an elevated seat of departed souls (*preta*). The Nārasimhī, resembling Nṛṣimha (the Man-Lion Incarnation) came there. The wife of Yama looking fearful like Yama arrived there on the battlefield smiling and with staff in Her hand mounted on the back of a buffalo. Thus the wives of Kuvera, Varuṇa, and other Devas came there with proper

forms, *vāhanas* and ornaments accompanied by their forces and all excited. Seeing them all, the Devī Ambikā became glad; the Devas, too, became peaceful and expressed their great joy; the Dānavas were afraid at the sight of them. Śaṅkara, auspicious to all the beings, came there to the battlefield, surrounded by these goddesses and thus said to Caṇḍīkā: 'Slay quickly all these Asuras—Śumbha, Niśumbha and all other Dānavas—to serve the cause of the Devas. Let all the goddesses destroy the Dānava race and thus free the world from dangers; they may, then, return to their own abodes. Let the Devas get their shares of sacrifices, let the Brāhmaṇas perform the sacrificial acts, and let all the creatures, moving or not moving, be happy. Let all calamities such as proceed from drought, excessive rain, rats, foreign invasion, locusts and birds, bats, etc., come to an end. Let the clouds bestow rains regularly and let the cultivation yield ample harvests.'

34-40. Vyāsa said: "O King! When Śaṅkara, the Lord of the gods and Auspicious to all, said thus, a wonderful female ensued out of the body of Caṇḍīkā, very furious, horrible, with hundreds of jackals surrounding and yelling; then that *śakti* of dreadful appearance said to the five-faced Śiva, smiling: 'O Deva of the Devas! Go quickly to the lord of the Daityas; do the duty of a messenger for us, O Destroyer of lust! O Śaṅkara! Tell that haughty lustful Śumbha and Niśumbha to leave the Heavens and go to Pātāla. Let the Devas reign in the Heavens; Indra go to his own beautiful throne; let all the Devas go to their appropriate places in Heaven and receive their sacrificial offerings duly. And if the Demons desire to live, let them go quickly to the city of Pātāla where other Dānavas are dwelling. Else, if they like to die, let them go quickly to the battlefield and let their flesh be eaten up by Her jackals.'

41. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing Her words, Śūlapāni went quickly to Śumbha, the lord of the Dānavas, seated in the assembly, and said thus:

42-44. 'O King! I am Hara, the Destroyer of the Asura Tripurā; now I have come to you for your good as a messenger of Ambikā Devī. Quit the Heavens and Earth and go quickly to Pātāla where reside the powerful Bali

and Prahlāda, or if you like to court Death, come to fight; I will slay you all in a moment. O King! The Great Queen Ambikā Devī has sent me with these instructions for your welfare and information.'

45-63. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus conveying the nectarlike, beneficial words of the Devī to the chief Daityas, Śiva the Holder of the trident returned to his own place. The *śakti* that sent Śambhu as a messenger to the Dānavas is known in three worlds as Śiva Dūtī. The Daityas, thus hearing the rigorous words of the Devī, put on their coats of armor and taking their bows and arrows, quickly went out to fight. They came with great force to the battlefield, stretched their bows to their ears and shot piercing arrows, sharpened on stone and tipped with iron, at Caṇḍīkā Devī. The Kālikā Devī, too began to strike some with the trident, some with the *śakti* weapon, and some with clubs, and rent them asunder and devoured them all, and began to roam in the field. Brahmānī began to pour water from Her Kamaṇḍalu on the powerful Dānavas in the battlefield and thus destroyed them. Maheśvarī, mounting on Her Bull gave violent blows with Her trident and thus lay them dead on the ground. Vaisnavī, with the blow of Her club, took away the lives of many Daityas and striking them with Her Discus out off the heads of several others. Indrānī hurled Her thunderbolt at the chief Dānavas, already struck by the feet of the elephant and lay them dead on the field. Nārasimhī tore the strongest Dānavas with Her sharp nails and, devouring them, walked to and fro and made dreadful sounds. Śiva Dūtī began to laugh hoarsely and laid the Dānavas flat on the field, when they were at once devoured by Kālikā and Caṇḍīkā. Kaumāri, seated on a peacock, drawing the bowstring to Her ears hurled arrows sharpened on stone at the enemies and killed them to serve the cause of the gods. Vāruni tied down the Dānavas by Her *pāsa* weapons in face-to-face fighting; thus they lay down senseless on the ground. O King! Thus the Mātrikās, the goddesses, crushed the forces. Then the other powerful soldiers fled away terrified. The *'Boombā'* danger cry arose then loudly; on the other hand, the Devas began to shower flowers on the Devīs. Hearing the distressful agonies of the Asuras and the shouts of victory of the Devas, Raktabīja, the chief of the Dānavas became very angry. Seeing specially the

Dānavas flying away and the Devas shouting, that powerful Demon came hurriedly to the battlefield with anger. Then with eyes reddened with anger, and with various weapons came before the Devī, Raktabīja mounting on a chariot, and making unusual sounds with his bowstring.'

Here ends the Twenty-eighth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the description of the fighting of the goddesses in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXIX—the killing of Raktabīja

1-21. Vyāsa said: "O King! Please hear attentively about the extraordinary boon that was given by Mahādeva, the God of gods, to the great warrior Raktabīja. Whenever a drop of blood from the body of that great warrior will drop on the surface of the earth, immediately will arise innumerable Dānavas equal in form and power to him; thus the Deva Rudra granted the Demon a wonderful boon. Elated with the boon, he entered into the battlefield with great force in order to kill Kālikā and Ambikā Devī. Seeing the Vaisnavī *śakti*, lotus-eyed, seated on the bird Garuḍa, the Demon struck Her with a violent weapon (named *śakti*). She then baffled the weapon by Her club and hurled the Sudarśana disc on the great Asura Raktabīja. Thus struck by the disc, blood began to ooze out from his body as the red stream of soft red sandstone comes out of a mountaintop. Wherever on the surface of the earth drops of blood fell from his body, then and there sprang out thousands and thousands of demons like him. Indrāni, the wife of Indra, became very angry and struck the terrible Raktabīja with his thunderbolt. Streams of blood then began to ooze out from his body. No sooner the drops of blood fell from the Demon's body than were instantaneously born from the blood many powerful Asuras of similar forms, having similar weapons and hard to be conquered in battle. Brahmānī then becoming enraged struck at him with the staff of Brahmā with greater force. Māheśvarī rent the Dānava asunder by striking him with Her trident. Nārasimhī pierced the Asura with Her nails; Vārāhī struck at him with Her

teeth. Then the Dānava becoming angry shot at them all with sharpened arrows and pierced them all. Thus when the Mātrikā Devīs were pierced by the club and other various weapons of that great Asura, they got very angry and pierced the Dānavas in return with shots of arrows. Kaumārī, too, struck at his breast with Her weapon named *śakti*. The Dānavas then got angry and hurled on them multitude of arrows and began to pierce them. O King! Caṇḍīkā Devī, getting angry, cut his weapons into pieces and violently shot other arrows at him. O King! Thus struck by severe blows, when blood began to flow in profuse quantities from his body, thousands and thousands of Dānavas resembling Raktabīja sprang out instantly from it. So much so, that the heavens were all covered over with Raktabījas that sprang up from the blood. They all covered all over their bodies with coats of armor, began to fight terribly with weapons in their hands. Then the Devas, seeing that the innumerable Raktabījas were striking the Devī, became very much frightened and were distressed with sorrow. They began to talk with each other with sorrowful countenances that thousands and thousands of huge-bodied warriors were springing from the blood. These were all very powerful; so how could they be destroyed? In this battlefield there were now left only the Mātrikās, Kālikā and Caṇḍīkā. It would be certainly extremely difficult for them to conquer all these Dānavas. And if at that moment, Śumbha and Niśumbha were to join them with his army, certainly a great catastrophe would occur.

22-28. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the Devas were thus extremely anxious, out of terror, Ambikā Devī said to the lotus-eyed Kālī: 'O Cāmuṇḍā! Open out your mouth quickly, and no sooner I strike Raktabīja with weapons, you would drink off the blood as fast as it runs out of his body. Instantly I will kill those Dānavas sprung from the blood with sharpened arrows, clubs, swords and *musalas;* and you would then be able to devour them all at your will, and, then, roam in this field as you like. O Large-eyed One! You would drink off all the jets of blood in such a way that not a drop of it escapes and falls on the ground. And then when they will all be devoured, no more Dānavas would be able to spring. Thus they will surely be extirpated; otherwise they will never be destroyed. Let Me begin to strike

blows after blows on Raktabīja and you better drink off quickly all the blood, being intent on destroying the forces. O Camuṇḍe! Thus, the Dānavas being all exterminated, we will hand over to the Indra, the lord of the Devas, his Heavens without any enemy; and, thus, we can go peacefully and happily to our own places.'

29-47. Vyāsa said: "O King! The Cāmuṇḍā Devī, of furious strength, hearing thus the Devī's words began to drink the jets of blood coming out of the body of Raktabīja. The Devī Ambikā began to cut the Demon's body into pieces and Cāmuṇḍā, of thin belly, went on devouring them. Then Raktabīja, becoming angry, struck Cāmuṇḍā with his club. But though She was thus hurt severely, She drank off the blood and then devoured all the limbs thereof. O King! Thus Kālikā Devī drank off the blood of all other powerful wicked Dānava Raktabījas that sprang out of the blood. Ambikā thus destroyed them. Thus all the Dānavas created out of the blood were devoured; then there was left at last the real Raktabīja. Ambikā Devī then cut him asunder into pieces by Her axe and thus killed him. Thus, when the dreadful Raktabīja was slain in the battle, the Dānavas fled away trembling with fear. Without any weapons, covered all over their bodies with blood, and void of consciousness they uttered, dumbfounded 'Alas! Alas! What has happened, what has happened?'

Thus crying, they told their King Śumbha thus: 'O King of Kings! Ambikā Devī has killed Raktabīja and Cāmuṇḍā has drunk off all their blood. The carrier (*vāhana*) of Devī, the powerful ferocious Lion killed other powerful warriors and Kālī devoured the remaining soldiers. O Lord of the Dānavas! We have fled and come to you to give the news of the battle and to describe the wonderful doings of that Caṇḍīkā Devī in the battlefield. O King! In our opinion, no one will be able to conquer that Lady, be he a Daitya, Dānava, Gandharva, Asura, Yakṣa, Pannaga, Chārana, Rākṣasa or Uraga. O King of Kings! The other Goddesses, Indrāni and others, have come to the battle on their own carriers respectively and are fighting with various weapons. O Lord of the Dānavas! The Dānava forces are all slain by them with the excellent weapons in their hands. Even Raktabīja has been slain in

no time. That Lion, of indomitable prowess, killed the Rākṣasas in the battle; The Devī alone is hard to conquer; how much more would it be impossible to conquer Her when She has been joined with other Goddesses! So consult with the ministers and do what is reasonable. In our opinion it is better to make treaty with Her and quit your enmity. O King! Think over the fact that that Lady destroyed all the Dānavas and at last drank off the blood of Raktabīja and at last killed him. What on earth can be more wonderful than this? O King! The Devī Ambikā killed all the other Daityas and Cāmuṇḍā devoured their blood, flesh, and all. Considering all this, it is now better for us to serve the Devī Ambikā or fly away to Pātāla. No more fighting is desirable. She is not an ordinary woman; She is Mahā-Māyā, there is not the least doubt in this. Only to serve the cause of the Gods, She has manifested Herself and is now destroying the Rākṣasaś race.'

48. Vyāsa said: "Hearing thus, Śumbha got confounded by Kāla (Time), as his end was coming nigh, and said the following words, his lips quivering with anger:

49-54. 'You are struck with fear; so you all take the refuge of Caṇḍīkā or fly down to Pātāla; but I will kill Her with all my exertion and effort. I conquered all the hosts of Devas and I have enjoyed their kingdom; shall I now, out of the fear of one Lady, fly and enter into the Pātāla? All my attendants, Raktabīja and other heroes, are now slain in the battle and is it possible that I will now fly away out of the sake of preserving my life only. See! The death of all the beings is ordained by Kāla and it is unavoidable. No sooner a being is born, he is liable to the fear of death. How can a man, then, out of fear of death, quit all his name and fame? O Niśumbha! I will now go immediately to the battle, mounting on my chariot and will return after slaying Her in battle. And if I cannot kill Her, I will not then return any more. O Best of warriors! Better stand on my side with all your forces and kill that Lady in no time, with sharp arrows.'

55-58. Niśumbha said: 'Today I will go to the battle and slaying that Kālikā, will shortly return here with Ambikā. O King! Do not think at all for that

Lady; see my world-conquering strength and look at that weak woman; there is a vast difference. Cast aside your this great mental anxiety and trouble. Enjoy, O brother, excellent things. I will bring that dignified Lady with all honors before you. O King! You ought not to go to the battle when I am alive. I will presently go to the fight and bring for you that Lady as a sign of our victory.'

59-60. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying, the younger brother, proud of his own strength, went hurriedly to the battlefield, mounting on his big chariot. He was protected all over his body by his coat of armor and he was well provided with various weapons and all other accoutrements of war. The bards began to sing hymns to him and various other propitious ceremonies were being performed."

Here ends the Twenty-ninth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Raktabīja in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXX—the killing of Niśumbha

1-10. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus making a firm resolve that there would be either victory or death, the great warrior Niśumbha went to fight with the Devī, with great excitement and with all his forces. Śumbha, too the Lord of the Daityas, accompanied by his forces, went after Niśumbha; Śumbha knew full well the rules of warfare; therefore he remained a witness there. Indra and the other Devas and Yakṣas, all stationed themselves in the celestial space, covered with clouds, eager to see that fight. Niśumbha came to the field, and, taking the strong bow made of horn, began to shoot arrows after arrows at the Divine Mother with the object of frightening Her. Seeing Niśumbha with his excellent bow, shooting arrows, Caṇḍīkā began to laugh frequently. With a soft slow voice She spoke to Kālikā: 'O Kālī! See their foolishness! They have come before Me, courting death. They are so much deluded by My Māyā, that they yet expect victory when they have already witnessed the death of Raktabīja and many Dānavas. Hope is so

very strong that it never quits a man. How wonderful is this that some of their armies are destroyed, some are wounded, some are rendered senseless, some made powerless, some have fled; seeing all these, yet, they have come to fight, as it were, fastened by the cord of hope of victory. O Kālī! Today I will certainly slay Niśumbha and Śumbha. Their death is nigh; deluded by the Daivī Māyā, they have come to Me. Therefore, in the face of all the Devas, I will kill them today.'

11-24. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying, and suddenly drawing Her bow, Caṇḍī covered Niśumbha all over with a multitude of arrows. Niśumbha, too, cut those arrows into pieces by his sharp arrows; thus the fight became more and more dreadful between them. At this time, the Lion of Bhagavatī came down upon the forces, quivering his mane, like a powerful elephant going down into a lake. By his nails and teeth, he tore asunder the bodies of the Dānavas that fell before him and devoured them, as if they were infatuated elephants. That Lion thus crushing down the soldiers, Niśumbha came forward hurriedly, drawing his excellent bow. Hundreds of other generals of the Dānavas came up there to kill the Devī, biting their lips, their eyes reddened with anger.

In the meantime Śumbha came very hurriedly there with his forces to capture the Divine Mother. Coming to the battlefield Śumbha saw that the Divine Mother was standing before him; though She was looking very beautiful, fit for love sentiment, yet She was filled also with the sentiment of fiery wrath. At that time the large eyes of Bhagavatī, the most beautiful in the three worlds, though naturally red, looked more red due to wrath. When Śumbha saw Her lovely features, the desire to marry Her and the hope of victory all vanished away from his mind; and he stood there with bow in his hand, firmly holding in his mind that he would die. Seeing the Dānava in that state, She smiled and began to say, so that all the Dānavas could hear. 'O wretched fools! If you all want to live, quit all your weapons here, go to the Pātāla or to the middle of the ocean. Or be slain in the battle by My arrows and go to heavens and enjoy there without any fear all the enjoyments and sports there. Weakness and heroism, both cannot be

expected at one and the same time and at the same individual; therefore I am ordering you to dispel your fears. Now go wherever you find your ease and happiness.'

25-35. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing these words of the Devī, that haughty Niśumbha ran forward, holding in his hand the sharpened axe and shield adorned with eight Chandras (embossed) and firstly struck with sword violently on the proud Lion; then, whirling with great force that sword, hurled it upon the Divine Mother. The Devī, then, thwarted off the blow of the sword by Her club and struck at his arm by *paraśu*. The warrior Niśumbha, thus struck at his arm, patiently bore that hurt and struck at Caṇḍīkā by his axe. The Devī then made such a terrible noise of bells that all the Daityas were struck with terror. Then She, desiring to kill Niśumbha, began to drink nectar frequently. O King! Thus the terrible fight went on between the Devas and Dānavas both trying to defeat the other party. Then began to dance in the battlefield, the cruel voracious dogs, jackals, vultures, herons, crows and other birds, very much gladdened. The battlefield was drenched with blood and the dead carcasses of innumerable Dānavas, elephants and horses. Niśumbha then seeing the Dānavas dead on the field, became very angry and ran forward with his terrible club before the Devī. That proud Asura struck first at the head of the Lion with that club, laughed again and again and struck the Devī with that same club. The Devī, too, got very angry seeing Niśumbha before Her and striking at Her. She then spoke thus:

36. 'O you stupid! Wait till I sever your head from your body by this axe. Soon you will be sent unto death with your head severed from your body.'

37-64. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus saying the Caṇḍīkā Devī instantly cut off the head of Niśumbha by Her axe with great caution. The head thus severed from the body by the blow of the Devī, the headless Demon began to roam there with great force with club in his hand. The Devas then got very much frightened; The Devī, then, cut off the hands and feet of that headless Demon with sharpened arrows. That vicious wretch fell down

lifeless on the ground like a mountain. The powerful Daitya Niśumbha being thus killed, a great uproar arose amidst his panic-stricken forces. The soldiers, covered all over their bodies with blood, left all their weapons in the field, began to make the *Boombā* sound, a piteous cry with mouth and hands as sign of danger, and fled away to King Śumbha.

He, the tormentor of the foes, then asked them coming: 'Where is Niśumbha now? Why have you fled away from the field?' Thus hearing the King's words, they bowed down and said: 'O King! Your brother Niśumbha is lying dead on the battlefield. O King! The Devī killed all the Dānava warriors that attended your brother; only we are left and have come here to give you the information. O King! Niśumbha has been killed by the weapons of the Devī. So we think you ought not to go to the battle. Know this as certain that the Lady, the Highest Cause of this Universe has come here to destroy the Dānavas, the object being to serve the cause of the Gods. This Lady is not an ordinary woman; She is the Supreme Force; Her doings are inconceivable; what more can be said than the fact that the Devas never can know Her! This Devī can assume various forms; She is the origin of Māyā; She is very clever; She is adorned with various ornaments and is holding various weapons in Her hands. Her doings are incomprehensible; She is like a second Night of Dissolution at the end of the world; She is Perfect, endowed with all auspicious signs, capable to go beyond the insurmountable. This wonderful Devī is serving the cause of the gods, and the Devas from the sky are singing hymns to Her. O King! It is now your paramount duty to fly away and save your life; if you live, you may have the chance for gaining the victory when time will turn out favorable; there is no doubt about this. It is Time that makes a strong man weak; and it is that very Time that makes that weak man strong again and stimulates him for victory. Time makes a generous donor a beggar and it is Time that makes the same beggar again a generous donor. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, Indra and other Devas are all under the sway of this Time; so Time is the Sovereign of all. Therefore, O King! Wait for this Time. Now Time is favorable to the Gods and inimical to you. Therefore Time is destroying now the Daityas. But the course of Time is not the same throughout. O

King! The actions of Time are various no doubt. Time creates men and Time destroys them. The time of creation is different from the time of destruction, this is evident to you before your eyes. See! When Time was favorable to you, you subjected Indra and all other Devas and made them pay taxes to you; and now Time is unfavorable to you; so an ordinary weak woman is killing the powerful Dānavas. Time, therefore, is doing favorable things and also unfavorable things. The host of Devas or the woman Kālī is not the cause thereof. O King! The present Time is not favorable to you and the Daityas; knowing this, do as you like. See! Indra, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Yama and other prominent Devas all fled before in battle, quitting the weapons. So, knowing this world as subject to the control of Time, you can now fly away and go quickly to the Pātāla. For if you live, you will get in future all the pleasures; and if you be killed, your enemies will all be very glad and roam everywhere fearlessly, singing propitious songs.'

Here ends the Thirtieth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the killing of Niśumbha in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXI—the death of Śumbha

1. Vyāsa said: "O King! Śumbha, the Lord of the Daityas, hearing the words of the soldiers, began to speak, then, with eyes rolling with anger.

2-15. Śumbha said: 'O fools! What are you saying all this? How can I do this unspeakably mean act and then hope to live? How shall I be able to roam in this world when I have become the cause the slaying of my brothers and ministers? Time is the more powerful cause of all that takes place, good or bad; so when this formless Time is the Supreme Ruler, what use is there in my brooding over the result? Let whatever come that is inevitable, let whatever be done that is destined to take place; death or life, I do not think of either. The more so when Time is never able, even when worshipped, to thwart off death or life when their proper moment arrives. See! The God of rain gives us rain in the rainy season; but, it is seen that sometimes it does

not rain in the month of *śrāvan* (the rainy season); whereas it rains sometimes in the month Agrahāyana, Pausa, Māgha, or Phālguṇa (not the rainy season). Therefore it is evident that Time is not the chief factor. Fate is stronger than Time; Time is merely the instrumental cause. It is this Fate that has created all this universe; it cannot be rendered otherwise. I consider Fate Supreme; fie on one's own exertion! For, Lo! Niśumbha, who had before conquered all the Devas, is slain today by an ordinary woman! Alas! When Raktabīja too had been slain, how can I desire to hold on to my life, foregoing all my name and fame! Even Brahmā, who has created all this universe, will not sooner come to an end than his longevity expires. Four thousand *yugas* constitute one day of Brahmā; and in that one day fourteen Indras perished; so twice the life of Brahmā constitute the life of Viṣṇu; similarly twice the life period of Viṣṇu constitute the life period of Maheśa; and when their longevities expire, they come to an end. This visible earth, mountains, sun and moon all will perish; so it has been specially ordained by the Destiny; therefore, O Fools! I do not care a bit for death. When a being is born, he must die; and when anyone dies, he will be born again; there is no doubt about this. So one ought to preserve one's name and fame which is more permanent than this transitory body. Prepare my chariot; I will go today to the battlefield; let victory or defeat come what it may, as Fate has ordained. I will soon go to fight.'

16-33. Thus saying, Śumbha mounted on the chariot quickly and went where the Devī Ambikā was staying. Then the fourfold army, cavalry, infantry, chariots, horses and elephants and innumerable soldiers followed him with weapons in their hands. Going there to the Himālaya mountain, he saw the Divine Mother sitting on Her Lion. She appeared so very lovely as to enchant the three worlds. Her body was decorated with various ornaments, all the auspicious gems were manifest; the Devas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas and Kinnaras in the heavens were all worshipping Her with hymns and Pārijāta flowers; and the Devī was making beautiful sounds with bells and conches, indicative of Her victory. Seeing Her, Śumbha, very much enchanted with passionate love and struck with the five arrows of Cupid, thought thus: 'How wonderful is Her lovely countenance! See! How

wonderful and amazing is Her skilfulness! Delicacy and capability to endure the hardships of war, though quite contrary to each other, are both in Her. What a wonder is this! Her body is extremely delicate and limbs are lean and thin; besides She is lately blooming into womanhood; still She does not feel any passion; this is undoubtedly very wonderful! She is as exquisitely beautiful as can be desired of in one's mind; and though She is endowed with all the auspicious signs, yet She has no inclinations for all the pleasures and allurements of the world and is now slaying the powerful Asuras; this is wonderful indeed! Now what steps are to be taken so that this Lady comes under my control? All the *mantrams* also are not with me now to bring over this Swan-eyed Lady unto me. This proud lovely Lady is all *mantrams* incarnate; how will She come under my control? This heroic Lady cannot be controlled by conciliatory words, allurements, dissensions; neither is it advisable to fly away from the battlefield and to go to Pātāla. What am I to do? Where shall I go in this critical moment? And if I die at the hands of this Lady, that death is not a glorious one; it will take away my fame. Death in a battlefield is conducive to one's wellbeing, so the sages say, when both the parties are equally strong. The Devas have created this Lady stronger than even hundred strong men; She is a woman merely in name. This Lady is very powerful and has come here to destroy the Dānavas; there is no doubt about this. What effect will conciliatory words now produce on Her? She has come to slay us; will She be appeased with good words? Neither will allurements of precious things be of any avail, for She is decked with various arms and weapons; nor will it be of any use to sow dissensions between the Devas and Her. Further all the Devas are under Her control. Therefore it is far better to die than to fly; victory or death would come unto me today as Fate has ordained.'

34-46. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus thinking in his mind, Śumbha became ready to show his strength and firmly resolved to fight. Then he said to the Devī before him: 'Devī! Fight. But, O One of delicate limbs! Thy so much toil is in vain. Thou hast no sense at all; for Thou art doing contrary to the doings of womankind. The pair of eyes of women are their arrows; the

eyebrows are their bows; their gestures and postures are their weapons and their hits are those persons who are skilled in amorous love sentiments. The dyes used in painting the bodies are their armors, their mental desires are their chariots, so sweet soft words and conversations are their trumpet sounds; women have no other things for their war preparations. Therefore, O Beloved! Any other weapons are mere mockeries and ridiculous; their modesty is their ornament; impudence can never grace them. An exquisitely beautiful woman, if engaged in a fight will look harsh; especially when Thou wilt draw Thy bow, how wilt Thou be able to hide Thy breasts? When Thou wilt run with Thy club, where will Thy gentle treadings go? O Beautiful! Thy councillors are this Kālikā and the stupid Cāmuṇḍā. Caṇḍīkā is Thy adviser; her voice is very hoarse; how can then she be able to nurse Thee? Again this Lion, the terror of all the beings, is Thy carrier. Therefore, O Dear! Leave aside all these and come over unto me. O Beautiful One! That Thou art ringing Thy bells and dost not sound. Thy lute goes quite against Thy beauty and youth. O Sensitive One! If Thou likest to fight, better assume an ugly appearance, let Thy nature be ferocious and cruel; let Thy color be black like a crow; lips elongated, legs long, nails ugly, teeth horrible, and let Thy eyes be ugly or yellow like those of a cat. O Devī! Assume such an ugly appearance and stand firmly for the fight. O Deer-eyed One! Speak first harsh words unto me; then I will fight with Thee; my hand does not get up to strike Thee with handsome teeth, in the battlefield, Who art like a second Rati.'

47. Vyāsa said: "O Best of the descendants of Bhārata! When Śumbha said thus, the Divine Mother, seeing him passionate, smiled and said:

48-50. 'O stupid one! Why are you so much distressed with passion? O fool! If your hand does not come forward to strike weapons at Me, then fight with this ugly Kālikā or Cāmuṇḍā; they are your best compeers in the battlefield; they will fight with you; I will stand as a mere Witness.' Thus saying, the Devī Bhagavatī said to Kālikā, in sweet words: 'O Kālikā! Your nature is fierce; this Śumbha likes also the fierce; so kill him.'

51-69. Vyāsa said: "O King! That Kālikā, the incarnation of Death, thus ordered, took up Her club immediately and became ready to fight, as if sent there direct by the God of Death. A dreadful fight then ensued between the two; and the high-souled Munis and the Devas were present there and witnessed the great event. Śumbha first struck at Kālikā, raising his club. Kālikā then violently struck Śumbha in return with her club. Instantly she made a dreadful sound, broke down his chariot, glittering like gold, into pieces, killed the horses of the chariot and slew the charioteer. Walking then on foot with a very heavy club in his hand, Śumbha struck with great anger on the breast of Kālikā and began to laugh. Kālikā, in the meanwhile, rendering his stroke useless, soon took up Her axe and cut off his left hand, pasted with sandal and decked with arms and weapons. His left hand thus out off, his whole body was drenched with torrents of blood; yet he came up with club in his hand struck Kālikā with it. Kālikā, too, laughed and with Her scimitar cut off his right arm holding the club and ornamented with armlet. Śumbha became angry and came up violently to kick Her when Kālikā quickly cut off his two legs. His arms and legs thus severed from his body, the Demon frightened Kālikā and told Her, 'Wait, wait.' And soon he came up before Her. Seeing the Demon coming, Kālikā severed his neck from his body like a lotus; blood began to gush out in continuous streams. O King! The head of Śumbha, thus severed from his body, fell on the ground like a mountain. Immediately the life left his body. Seeing the Dānava fall down lifeless, Indra and the other hosts of Devas began to worship the Devī Bhagavatī, Cāmuṇḍā and Kālikā, and chanted lovely hymns to them. The winds then began to blow pleasantly; all the quarters looked very clear and Fire in sacrificial altars, being circumambulated, became very propitious. On the other hand, those Daityas that remained alive quit their arms and weapons, bowed down to the Divine Mother, and fled away one and all to the Pātāla. O King! I have now described in regular order to you how the Devī protected the Devas and destroyed Śumbha and other Asuras. Those human beings on the surface of the earth that read this anecdote from the beginning to the very end or hear it constantly, get all their desires fulfilled; there is no doubt about this. O King! Verily he gets a son who has not got any son; he gets

abundance of wealth who is without any wealth; the diseased become cured of their diseases; what more can be said than the fact that he who hears this glorious deed of the Devī in its entirety, gets all that he desires. O King! That man who reads daily this holy anecdote or hears it, has never to fear from his enemies; in addition be gets liberation after leaving his body."

Here ends the Thirty-first Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the death of Śumbha in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXII—King Suratha goes to the forest

1-4. Janamejaya said: "O Best of Munis! The glory of Caṇḍīkā has been fully described by you. By whom was She worshipped in the ancient times after reading and hearing of Her glorious deeds: the killing of Madhu and Kaitava, etc.? Who was it that derived the best effects by worshipping the Devī, the Bestower of all desires? When and with whom was She pleased and then offered boons? O Ocean of mercy! Kindly narrate fully all these things to me. O Brāhmaṇa! Describe to me also the rules how the meditation, worship and *homa* of the Great Devī are conducted."

Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, the son of Satyavatī, was very glad to hear these questions of Janamejaya and began to describe how the worship, etc., of Mahā-Māyā, the Devī Bhagavatī are to be done."

5-21. Vyāsa said: "O King! In days of yore in Svārochisa *manvantara* there was a king named Suratha, very liberal-minded and devoted to governing well his subjects. He was truthful, active and energetic, and devoted to his *guru*; he always served the twice-born and he never used to hold any sexual intercourse except with his legal wife. He was generous, not liking to quarrel with anybody, and expert in the science of archery. While he was thus governing his kingdom, the Mleccha hill tribes turned out to be his enemies. They destroyed the city of Kolā, became very haughty and turbulent and desired to conquer the whole earth by their sheer force. Thus

accompanied by the great fourfold army of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry, they came to conquer the dominion of the King Suratha. A dreadful fight then ensued between the King and the dreadful Mlecchas. O King! The Mlechcha forces were not at all numerous whereas the armies of the king were large; still the Mlecchas were lucky to win the battle. The King, defeated, fled to his own city which was a strongly fortified place. The good King, wise in statesmanship when he saw that his ministers had gone over to the enemies' party, became very anxious and thought whether it was advisable for him to wait for a better opportunity, remaining within his own extensive city, well guarded by a strong wall and ditch, or it would be better to fight on. The King thought also that it would not at all be advisable to consult with his ministers who were then under the control of his enemies; what then would he do under the circumstances? Those vicious ministers could at any time deliver him to the hands of his enemies; what would then happen to him? Those men that are avaricious can do anything in this world; therefore it would never be advisable to trust them. The people under the sway of greed commit injury to their fathers, brothers, friends, acquaintances, their *gurus* and the adored Brāhmaṇas. When the ministers had joined with his enemies, they could well be classed with the vicious; no doubt about this. Never could they be trusted under the above circumstances. Thus pondering over the matter, the King became absentminded, and, finding no remedy, went out of the city alone, mounted on a horse. The intelligent King, helpless, entered into a dense forest and thought, "Where will I go now?" Knowing, then, that there was at a distance of three Yojanas from that place, a hermitage of the great ascetic Sumedhā Ṛṣi, the King went there.

22-33. O King! That hermitage was more beautiful than even the Heavens; it was on the bank of a river; various kinds of trees were there; it was frequented with wild animals having no enmity with each other; the whole place echoed with the sounds of cuckoos. The students were studying and reverberating the atmosphere with their Vedic chants; hundreds of herds of deer were running there; rice trees had grown there wildly at places and their harvests were collected at places; good flowery trees and others with

delicious fruits were seen there; at places fragrant smells of oblations of ghee, etc., were coming; all these were delighting to any man who went or stayed there. The King Suratha was very glad to see that *āśrama;* he became fearless and wanted to stay there in the hermitage of the Brāhmaṇa. Fastening his horse at the root of a tree, the King approached humbly to the Ṛṣi, and saw that the Muni was seated on a deer skin under the shade of dense Sāl trees. He was peaceful, lean and thin by *tapasyā*. His stature was straight; and he was teaching his disciples and explaining to them the meaning of the *Veda śāstras*.

He was void of anger, greed, etc., beyond all the dualities, without any jealousy, always devoted to the contemplation of the Self, truthful and full of peace. Seeing him the King was filled with tears, prostrated before him and fell like a stick before him. The Muni seeing him thus asked him to get up and enquired about his welfare. A disciple then at the sign of the *guru*, gave him a *kuśāsan* (grass mat) to take his seat. The King got up and at his permission took his seat on that *kuśāsan;* the the Muni worshipped the King duly by offering to him water to wash his feet, *arghya* (an offer of green grass, rice, etc). Then the Muni asked him, "Who are you? Why are you come here? Why are you so anxious? Tell frankly all these that are not yet known to me. What do you want? Speak out your mind. Even if that be impracticable, I will no doubt try my best to accomplish your desired ends.'

34-36. The King said: 'O Muni! I am the King Suratha; defeated by my enemy, I have left my kingdom, palace and wife and have come to your refuge. O Brāhmaṇa! I am ready to do whatever you order me; on this surface of the earth there is no one but you who can protect me. Now I am very much terrified by my enemy; therefore I have come to you. O Muni! You protect those who come to seek your refuge; I have now come here to seek your shelter; so save me from this danger.'

37-38. The Maharṣi said: 'O King! Stay here without any fear; none of your enemies would be able to enter this hermitage by my power of *tapasyā*,

even if they be very powerful. O Best of Kings! You will not be allowed to kill any animals here; you will have to sustain yourself on this wild rice, roots and fruits, etc., as the rules of the forest living permit.'

39-48. Vyāsa said: "Thus hearing his words, the King began to live there, with all purity and without any fear, on roots and fruits. Once the King, while taking rest under the shade of a tree, while thinking of various things, thought of his own house thus: 'My enemies have, no doubt acquired my kingdom, but they are vicious and wicked, shameless Mlecchas and always addicted to sinful deeds; certainly they are tormenting my subjects. My elephants and horses are not regularly getting their food and have all become powerless; certainly they are suffering very much from my enemies. All the servants that were nourished by me before are now all suffering from troubles, having been subjected by my enemies. The wicked enemies are certainly squandering away my hoarded wealth to bad immoral purposes, in gambling, drinking and in revelling with prostitutes. Those Mlecchas and my ministers are always intent on vicious acts; they do not know who are the proper persons to be given charities; so they will no doubt exhaust away my coffers in doing sinful acts.' While the King was thus meditating seated at the root of a tree, there came one man of the Vaiśya caste looking very distressed. The King saw and instantly bade him take his seat beside him; then the King asked the Vaiśya: 'O Noble One! Of what caste are you? Whence are you coming to this forest? What is your name? What for you look so pale and distressed? What calamity has befallen to you? O good one! Two persons become friends whenever they speak seven words amongst them; according to this rule I am your friend; tell me, therefore, truly all these things.'

49. Vyāsa said: "The Vaiśya, hearing these words from the King, took his seat and felt himself much relieved. Thinking that he has met with a saint, began to speak thus:

50-52. 'O my Friend! I belong to the Vaiśya caste; my name is Samādhi; I was rich; never I had any jealousy towards anybody; always I used to

speak truth and was devoted to religious acts. My wife and sons are very greedy of money and are irreligious; so they cut off all their affections and connections with me, very difficult to cut though, and have driven me out of the house on the pretext that I am very miserly. Thus forsaken by my relatives, I have now come to this forest. You look to be a fortunate man; therefore kindly, O Dear One! give me now your introduction and oblige.'

53-55. The King said: 'I am the King Suratha; lately I had a defeat from the dacoits; moreover my ministers deceived me; consequently I am deprived of my kingdom and have now come here. O Best of Vaiśyas! Fortunately you have come to me today as my friend. We two will repose here gladly in this beautiful forest covered with trees. O intelligent one! Now quit your sorrow; be calm and quiet and rest with me, at your leisure, here happily.'

56-58. The Vaiśya said: 'O King! My friends and relatives must have been helpless, very sorrowful and they are distressed at my absence; they must have been troubled very much by diseases and misfortunes no doubt and have become very anxious. O King! I cannot remain quiet; my mind is being troubled with the thought how my wife and sons are spending their times now in pain or happiness? I am always thinking when I would see again my sons, wife, relatives, friends, acquaintances and my house? I cannot make me calm and quiet.'

59-60. The King said: 'O intelligent one! What pleasure can you expect to see your wicked sons and treacherous relatives who have driven you out of your house? Even the enemies are far better, provided they do good to us; what sorts of friends are they who impose on us afflictions and sorrows? Do you, therefore, make your mind calm and quiet and remain here in greatest peace and happiness.'

61. The Vaiśya said: 'O King! Even those that are wicked and cruel cannot quit their relatives. Today my mind is greatly agitated with the thought of my relatives; I cannot remain quiet.'

62. The King said: 'My mind too, is incessantly troubled with the thought of my kingdom. Come; let both of us go to the Muni and ask him what is the medicine for the cure of these our mental agonies.'

63-64. Vyāsa said: "O King! Thus making their determinations, they went humbly to the Muni to ask him about the causes of their sorrows. The King then went close to him and bowing down before him, took his seat and began to ask calmly and quietly the Muni who was sitting calm and serene."

Here ends the Thirty-second Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the King Suratha's going to the forest in the MahāPurāṇam Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIII—the Greatness of the Devī

1-8. The king Suratha said: "O Muni! This Vaiśya is now become a friend of mine in this forest; he has been expelled from his home by his sons and wife and he has come lately here to this forest. He is now suffering very much from the bereavement of his family and has become very much troubled in his mind. He is not getting any peace whatsoever. I am also like him and have become very distressed owing to my kingdom being robbed away. This thought, though really devoid of any substantial cause, is not leaving my heart now. Oh! My elephants and horses, now under my enemies, have become weak; my servants are suffering very much owing to my absence! My enemies will within no time squander away forcibly all my hoarded riches. This thought is not giving me any happiness; nay, I cannot get any sleep owing to this care and anxiety. O Lord! I know that this world is false as a dream; yet my mind is so deluded that I cannot make myself quiet. Who am I? What are those horses and elephants to me? They are not my brothers, sons, nor friends; yet I feel very much for them and am troubled with their troubles. O Muni! I know these all are delusions; still I am not able to make my mind free from them. This is very wonderful indeed! What is the cause of all this? O Lord! Nothing is veiled

from your sight; you are fully able to solve all these doubts. Therefore, O Ocean of mercy! Kindly explain to me and this Vaiśya the cause of all this delusion."

9. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the King Suratha asked thus, the Muni in reply said to him the following words, full of wisdom, so that his delusion and sorrow might vanish.

10-25. The Muni said: 'O King! I am telling you the cause of bondage as well the cause of release of all the beings in this Universe. She is known as Mahā-Māyā. She is the Mūla-Prakṛti, the state of equilibrium of the three *guṇas: sattva*, *rājas* and *tamas*. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra, Varuṇa, Vāyu and the other Devas, Gandharvas, Nagas, Rākṣasas, men, deer, animals, birds, trees and various kinds of creepers all are under Māyā; thus they are all bound; again they all get release when they are released by that Māyā. By Her is created all this world, moving and not moving, all the beings are caught in Her net and all are under Her control. You are a Kṣatriya; so *rājoguṇa* preponderates in you and your heart is thus rendered impure. She, by Her Māyā, deludes even the minds of those who are *jñānins* or wise; you are but an ordinary man compared to them. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa, though possessed of vast wisdom, still roam under the sway of Māyā in the three worlds completely deluded by their attachments to sensual objects.

O King! In the Satya Yuga, in ancient times Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa himself performed a very hard *tapasyā* in *śvetadvīpa*. He passed full ten thousand years in meditation, with the object of attaining the unbroken everlasting bliss and becoming steadfastly attached to *brahma-vidyā*. O King! Brahmā, too, became engaged in performing *tapasyā*, meditating the Primordial Force, *ādyā-śakti*, in a very wonderful solitary place for the cessation of delusion. Once on a time Vāsudeva Hari wanted to go to another place; he got up and started to see other places. Brahmā, also, left his place and started for another destination. When they met each other in their way, each one asked the other, "Who are you?" The Prajāpati answered: "I am

the Creator Brahmā." Hearing thus the Brahmā's words, Viṣṇu said: "O you stupid! I am Acyuta Viṣṇu; therefore I am the Creator of this world. You are inferior to Me as there is so much of *rājoguṇa* in preponderance in you. Know Me as the eternal Vāsudeva, preponderating in *sāttva-guṇa*. Do you not remember that I fought a dreadful battle for you and thus saved your life a short while ago? I slew the two Dānavas Madhu and Kaitava when you were much distressed by them and took My refuge. How then do you boast now! O fool! Quit your this vain boasting now. In this wide world, there is none superior to Me.'

26-31. The Ṛṣi said: 'Thus engaged in disputing with each other, their lips were quivering with anger and their eyes got red. When behold! there appeared suddenly between those two disputants, a nectar-like white phallic emblem (*liṅgam*), wonderfully long and extensive. Then a voice, without anybody, broke out in the Heavens and addressed Brahmā and Viṣṇu who were quarrelling thus! "Whoever amongst you will be able to go to the other end of this *liṅgam,* whether beyond its top or below its bottom, he is certainly the superior of you two; let one of you therefore go down to Pātāla and let the other go up to the Heavens. Leave off your useless disputations and take My word as proof. It is always advisable to select an umpire to decide such a quarrel as this that has sprung up between you two."

32-39. The Ṛṣi said: "O King! Hearing thus the divine word, both of them became ready and began energetically to measure the length of the wonderful *liṅgam* that stood in front of them. Viṣṇu went down to Pātāla and Brahmā went up to *ākāśa* to measure the Liṅgam and thus to ascertain their superiority. Going down some distance Viṣṇu got tired and doing his best, when he could not find out the end of the *liṅgam*, he returned and remained at the desired meeting place. On the other hand, Brahmā was ascending to the skies when he got one Ketakī flower dropping from the head of the *liṅgam*. He became very glad and returned also to the desired meeting place. Brahmā became very much elated with vanity and when he returned, he at once showed that flower to Viṣṇu and spoke thus the false

words: 'O Viṣṇu! This Ketakī flower has been obtained from the head of the *liṅgam*. I have brought this to you simply that you would recognize it and be convinced in your heart.' Hearing these words of Brahmā, Viṣṇu saw the Ketakī flower and said: 'O Brahmā! Who is your witness in this matter? He whose words are true, who is equal to all, who is intelligent, pure, and always of good conduct, he can be the witness in such matters of dispute.'

40-44. Brahmā said: 'Who will come now as witness from that far off place? This Ketakī flower is the witness; this will give evidence.' Thus saying, Brahmā requested Ketakī to give evidence; Ketakī soon replied thus to convince Viṣṇu. 'O Viṣṇu! I was on the head of Mahādeva; Brahmā has brought me from there down to this place; you ought not therefore to have any doubt on this point. My word is the evidence; Brahmā has gone to the other end of the *liṅgam*. Some devotee of Śiva put me on His head and Brahmā has got me down from there.' Hearing thus the words of Ketakī, Viṣṇu was very much astonished and said this: 'I cannot trust your word; if Mahādeva comes and speaks this Himself, then I can trust and take it as a proof.'

45-53. The Ṛṣi said: "O King! The eternal Mahādeva, hearing the words of Viṣṇu, spoke thus to Ketakī with great anger, 'O Liar! Do not utter such false words; You dropped down from My head and Brahmā while ascending up, picked you up on the way. Now as you have told a lie, I will never take you; you are henceforth forsaken by Me.' Brahmā was then very much put to shame; he bowed down to Viṣṇu; Mahādeva forsook the Ketakī flower from that date. O King! Such is the power of Māyā: when Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other wise persons are so self-deluded by Her, what need to speak of other ordinary mortals! See! Viṣṇu, the Lord of Lakṣmī, is self-deluded and is always deceiving the Daityas for the welfare of the Devas, without any fear whatsoever of the sin that he is thereby incurring. Though He is the Lord of all yet He has to take several incarnations in several wombs, forsaking the pleasures of the Heavens and fighting with the Daityas. O King! Viṣṇu is omniscient and He is the Lord of this world; specially He is the only One Supreme in the creation of the Gods. Now

when Māyā exercises such a powerful influence on Viṣṇu, what wonder is there that the other ordinary beings would be deluded by Her? O King! That Highest Prakṛti draws away violently the hearts of the wise and drags them down into the ocean of world. That Omnipresent Bhagavatī is ever the cause of bondage of all when She casts Her net of delusion, and She is again ever the cause of liberation when She imparts Her knowledge to them."

54. The King said: "O Brāhmaṇa! What is Her nature? and what is the Supreme Force? What is the Cause of this creation? And where is Her highest place? Kindly narrate all these to me."

55-66. The Ṛṣi said: "O King! She is beginningless; therefore She had no origin at any time; that Highest Devī is Eternal and She is always the Cause of all Causes. How then can any other be powerful like Her? O King! She resides in all the beings as the essential vital Force; deprived of that Force, every being is reduced to a dead carcass. She is pervading all beings as the Universal Force of Consciousness. The form of this *śakti* is the form made up of consciousness itself, the Brahman. just like the force of Fire is Fire itself; it is not seen in any other form. Her appearances and disappearances at times are simply for serving the purposes of the Gods. O King! Whenever the Devas and men worship Her, Ambikā makes Her appearance visible to destroy their pains and sufferings. She assumes various forms and possesses various powers. That Highest Īśvarī comes down of Her free will to serve Her purposes. She is not like the Devas, under the control of Daiva or Fate; She is not under the influence of Time, as both Fate and Time are created by Her. She always moves every being to action according to his capacity. Puruṣa is not the Doer; He is simply the Witness. This whole Universe is the object seen. That Devī is the Mother of all this that is witnessed. She is the Manifested, She is the Unmanifested and She is the Effect also. She alone is the Actress and manifests the world, and thus gives qualities to the Puruṣa. When the Puruṣa is colored thus, She destroys quickly these worlds. It is said that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are respectively the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the world;

but this is merely a statement; really they are merely instruments in Her hands. Bhagavatī has created them in reality for Her Pastime and stationed them in their respective posts. She has bestowed to them Her part manifestations—Sarasvatī to Brahmā, Lakṣmī to Viṣṇu, and Girijā to Maheśa—and has thus rendered them more powerful. They, the lords of the Devas, always meditate and worship Her as the Creatrix, Preservrix and Destructrix of this Universe. O King! I have thus described to you, as far as my intelligence and knowledge go, the holy greatness and Her excellent glory. In reality, I have not been able to come to the end of it.

Āūṁ aiṁ hṛīṁ klīṁ cāmuṇḍāyai vicce is the nine-lettered *mantra*.

Here ends the Thirty-third Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the description of the greatness of the Devī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Chapter XXXIV—Worship of the Devī

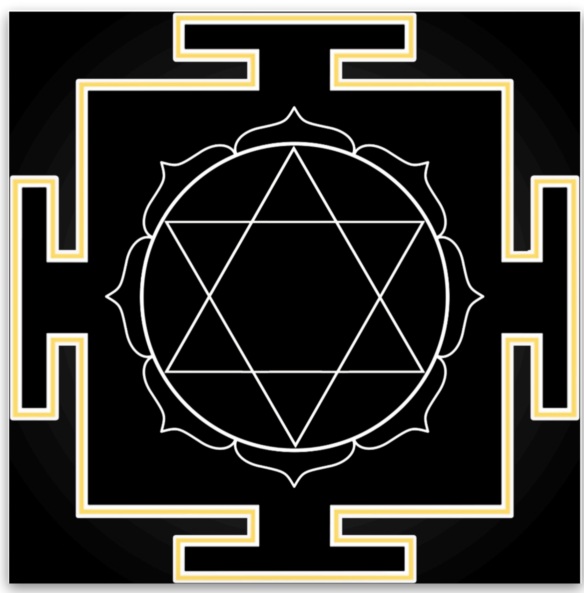
1. The King said: "O Bhagavān! Kindly narrate to me in detail now the methods how to serve and worship the Goddess, and the *mantrams* that are used on such occasions.

2-12. The Ṛṣi said: "O King! I am now describing the method how to worship the Goddess. Hear. This leads to the fulfilment of all desires, to the liberation from one's bondage, to Self-realization and to the destruction of all miseries. The worshipper has to perform his bath; then putting on a white cloth, he will have to perform his *Vaidik* and *Tāntrik sandhyā;* then he should, with his heart controlled, perform his *ācamana* ceremony and select a good auspicious site for his own *pūjā*. Next he should plaster the site with cow-dung and spread his sacred carpet (*āsana*), whereon he is to take his seat with a cheerful mind and sip water for *ācamana* three times. Then he is to collect the articles for worship according to his best capacity and place them duly in their respective positions. He is to perform *prāṇāyāma* (regulate his breath); and then follows the *bhuta-śuddhi* for purification of

the mind and formation of the celestial body: 'Dissolve earth into water, water into fire, fire into air, air into ether; ether into *ahaṅkāra*, *ahaṅkāra* into the *mahat-tattva* and *mahat-tattva* into *prakṛti*, the ultimate Cause.' Then he should do *jīva-śuddhi* by which the *sādhaka* becomes the Devatā-māyā; he then proceeds to *mātrikā-nyāsa*, setting mentally in their several places in the six *cakras,* and then externally by physical action the letters of the alphabet (*mātrikā*) which form the different parts of the body of the Devatā. He then places his hand on different parts of his body, uttering distinctly at the same time the appropriate *mātrikā* for that part.

He is to mention then the time, date, *tithi* and month of the year and make his *sankalpa;* then he will have to assign to the different parts of his body the *mātrikā-mantrams* duly as well as his own mantram (*ātmā-bīja*); next he is to meditate in his own body the seat of the different Devatās and do the internal worship. He is to breathe life into the Deity outside to be worshipped as well as within himself to be meditated and worshipped; then he is to do the same with the articles for worship and purify them by sprinkling with water and *astra* or *phat-mantram*, thus removing all sources of obstacles that are likely to interfere with the act.

Next, on an auspicious copper plate, he is to draw inside a hexagonal figure, two triangles crossing each other with their vertices, one upward and the other below, with white sandal paste or with eight perfumed things; and outside this figure, an octagonal figure of eight petals; outside this he is to draw the boundary lines that is called the *bhūpura*.



On each of the eight petals he is to write each letter of the nine-lettered *bīja-mantram* and the ninth letter in the central ovum. Next by the *mantram* by which breath is infused or by the Vedic *mantram* he will have to place the *yantra* in the proper position and then worship the *ādhāra-śakti* (the vital Force) in the central ovum and the holy seat with the *pītha-mantrams*. He will have to invoke the Devī, uttering the *bīja-mantram* over a golden plate or figure and carefully worship Her by offering seats and other articles duly as enunciated in the *Yāmala Tāntras*. Then he will have to perform the sixfold worship of the *ganas* in the six angles and worship Indra, etc., and Vajra and others in the *bhūpura* (boundary) and thus finish the *pūjā* of the *yantra*.

13-31. In the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvin or Chaitra, is to be observed the fasting of the Navarātra by those who desire for their own welfare. *Homas* are to be offered, many in number, and *mantrams* are to be recited, the same as in one's own *mantram*, good *pāyasam* with sugar, ghee, and honey mixed is to be offered in this ceremony. Goat meat, or holy leaves of the Bel tree, or red Karavīr flowers or *til* (sesame seed) mixed with honey can be used instead in the *homa* ceremony. The special days for the worship of the Devī are the eighth, ninth, or fourteenth day (*tithi*) of the fortnight. The feeding of the Brāhmaṇas must be done on each occasion. O King! Thus the poor become wealthy, the diseased get cured, and the persons that have no issue get obedient and well-qualified sons. The King, expelled from his kingdom, gets it back by the grace of Mahā-Māyā, dominion over the whole earth and becomes able to destroy all those enemies of his, by whom he was before vanquished, when he worships the Devī. The persons, desirous of learning, get undoubtedly the learning honorable and auspicious, provided he worships the Devī with his senses restrained. Persons of all castes, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas or śūdras can become masters of all pleasures and happiness provided they worship with devotion the Devī Jagaddhātrī, the Preserver of the World. A man or woman whoever performs the Navarātra vow always full of devotion, gets all the desired fruits. Whoever celebrates the holy Navarātra ceremony in the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvin with his heart full of the thought

of the Devī, gets all his desired fruits. O King! Now I am describing the rites and ceremonies. Here a square raised platform or altar is to be made according to the prescribed rules; a water-jar is then to be placed on it with the Vedic *mantrams* and due rites and ceremonies. One will have to make a beautiful *yantra* according to the previously laid rules and the water-jar is to be placed on it; then spread the beautiful *yava* grains all around the jar. An awning or pandal is to be erected over the altar and the place of worship, and the site is to be decorated with flowers. Lights and Dhūpas, incense and perfumes are then to be used in the hall of the Caṇḍīkā Devī.

O King! The Devī is to be worshipped thrice; morning, midday and evening; no miserliness is to be shown in spending wealth for this purpose. Lamps, *dhūpa*, good presents of rice and other edibles, flowers, and fruits of various kinds are to be offered in this worship of the Devī; the chanting of the hymns of the *Vedas*, songs and music with the various instruments are to be done and a grand festivity is to be made. Moreover, note this carefully that virgins are to be worshipped duly with sandal, ornaments, clothing, various edibles, sweet scented oil and beautiful garlands. This worship of the virgins is one of the essentials. Thus completing the worship of the Devī, *homa* is to be done duly with *mantrams* and other necessary articles on the eighth or the ninth *tithi*. Lastly the Brāhmaṇas are to be fed duly; then the worshipper is to take his first meal after fasting (i.e., make *pāranam*) on the tenth day; then presents and various articles are to be offered to the Brāhmaṇas, according to one's might and with devotion.

32-44. O King! Any man, or any chaste married woman or a chaste widow whoever performs thus the Navarātra Vrata gets in this world all the desired fruits and enjoys all sorts of enjoyments, gets unbounded happiness, and after death goes to the highest place. And if, owing to some cause or other, he has to take his birth again in this world, he would be born in an excellent family and would become endowed with good conduct and qualifications and get the unflinching devotion towards Ambikā Devī. O King! I have thus described to you the rules of the Navarātra ceremony; this vow is the best of all; highest and greatest

pleasures and happinesses are obtained in worshipping thus the auspicious Mahā Māyā. O King! Better worship Caṇḍīkā duly according to the prescribed rules; then you would be able, by Her grace, to conquer all your enemies and you will regain your excellent dominion, unshaken by any, and you will get again the highest pleasure and happiness when you will be reunited with your wife and sons in your own palace; there is no doubt about this. O Vaiśya! You, too, better worship the same Mahā-Mayā, the Goddess of the Universe, worshipping Whom leads to the fructification of all desires. You will then be able to regain all your worldly pleasures in your own home and be respected by your relatives and acquaintances and finally, after your death, you will go to the holy abode of the Devī. There is no doubt about this. Those that do not worship the Devī go to Naraka or hell; moreover they suffer much from various diseases in this world. Those that do not worship the Devī are always defeated by their enemies, are devoid of wife and sons, become stupid and suffer pains from their unsatisfied desires. And those that worship the Preservrix of this world with the Bel leaves, Karavīra flowers, *śatapatra* and Champaka flowers, that blessed man, devoted to the Devī, gets filled with all sorts of enjoyments. O King! What more can I say than this, that those who have worshipped the Devī Bhavānī with the *mantrams* approved by the *nigama-śāstras*, those very persons get honor in this world and are filled with all sorts of power and wealth. Verily, they stand foremost in the rank of best men, becoming the only repositories of all the best qualities in this world.

Here ends the Thirty-fourth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the methods of the worship of the Devī in Śrīmad Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa.

Note: For details of the *pūjā* see the *Prapañca-Sāra*. *Bhūpura* is what is thought over outside front or in the beginning. Here the Gana Devatās are first thought over and worshipped. 'Worship outside, worship inside and see the Deity in and out, everywhere and be free' is the motto of the worship. In the absence of the *yantra*, one can make a metal image of Bhagavatī and worship Her with the greatest caution with the *mantras* as

expounded by Śiva in the *Tantras* of Yāmalā and others. *Yantra* is that which restrains. This human body is the *yantra*, and its imitation is placed outside in various shapes and figures. The *yantra* is the mystical diagram used by the devotees for worship. Or one may use the Vaidik *mantrams* in worshipping the Deity in accordance with the prescribed rules and with his mind controlled; then, merged in meditation, one is to mutter silently, performing *japam* of the nine-lettered *mantram*, *krīṁ daksine kālike svāhā*. Japam (muttering or repeating silently the Mantram) is of two kinds: Nitya (daily) and Pauraścharanik (repetition of the name of the deity accompanied with burnt offerings). In the Nitya Japam, Nitya Homas are performed and in the occasional Pauraścharanik Japam, one tenth of this is offerred; Abhiseka, too, is one-tenth of this Homa; Tarpanam is one-tenth of Abhiseka and the feeding of the Brāhmaṇas is one-tenth of what is done in the Tarpanam. O King! Thus completing the Japam one is to read daily the Caṇḍī (do the Caṇḍīpātha) where the three glorious deeds of the Devī are narrated; next he will have to allow the Deity invoked to depart to Her own place. The Navarātra Vrata (nine-night vow) is next to be observed according to the proper rites and ceremonies. The *mantra* is *hrīm mahiṣa mardinyai svāhā*.

Chapter XXXV—King Suratha and Samādhi receive boons

1-12. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the Ṛṣi's words, the king Suratha and the Vaiśya, who were very distressed in their minds, became very much comforted and bowed down to the Muni with great humility and modesty. Their eyes expressed their gladness and their hearts were filled with loving devotion. Both of them, then, clever in speaking and of calm and quiet temper, began to address him with their folded hands. 'O Bhagavān! We were passing our days in a very humble and distressed spot; we are today purified by your good words, just as the country was rendered pure by Bhagīratha when he brought down the river Ganges here. The saints, adorned with purely good qualities, are incessantly engaged in doing good to others and how the people can be made happy. O intelligent

one! Surely we have come to this auspicious *āśrama* owing to our past good deeds in previous births, and all our miseries are therefore brought to their ends today. There are good many persons that roam in this world for their selfish ends; very few there exist like you, who are always ready to do good to others. O Muni! True that I am very much distressed but this Vaiśya is more distressed than me. Both of us, very much afflicted by the miseries of the world, have come gladly to your *āśrama* and are relieved of our bodily sufferings by your sight; and now, hearing your words, we are relieved also of our mental pain and sufferings. O Brāhmaṇa! We are very much blessed and our objects have been gained by your nectar-like words.

O thou, the ocean of mercy! You have purified us, out of your unbounded mercy. We are quite tired of this world; knowing this, do you lead us beyond this world by holding our hands and by initiating us with *mantrams*. O Best of Munis! We will first of all practice a very hard *tapasyā* (asceticism) and worship Bhagavatī, the awarder of happiness; then, seeing Her, we will go to our respective abodes. Now we expect the nine-lettered *mantram* of the Devī from your mouth and practising the *navarātra-vratam,* we will fast and meditate on the *mantram*.

Note: The nine-lettered *mantram* here is *āūṁ mahiṣamardinyai svāhā*. Instead of *āūṁ*, any of the following may be used: *hṛīṁ, klīṁ, aiṁ, śtrūṁ*, or *hūṁ* mentioned in *Sāradā Tilaka, Nārāyanī Tantra*, or in *Viśvasāra Tantra* (see page 125 of Tantra Sāra).

13-30. Vyāsa said: "O King! When the king and Vaiśya prayed thus to the Muni Sumedha, the best of the Munis, gave them the auspicious *mantram* with its seed (*bīja*) and as well what is to be meditated on (*dhyānam*). On getting the *mantram* with Ṛṣi, Chanda, seed *śakti* and Devatā duly, they welcomed the Muni and with his permission went to the holy bank of a river. Both of them were of delicate frames and both of them were fully determined; they went to a very solitary place and selected their place and took their seats there. There they spent one month in repeating silently the *mantram* and in chanting the three glorious deeds of Caṇḍī. In this short

period of one month, they became very much attached to the lotus feet of Bhavānī, and their minds were also much pacified. They attended to no other business; only they used to go to the Muni once a day, and bowing down before him they returned to their own seats of Kuśa grass and gave themselves up to the meditation of the Devī and always repeated silently their *mantrams*. O King! One year thus passed away; they then abstained from taking fruits and subsisted on the leaves of trees. Thus engaged in meditation and asceticism they passed away another year sustaining themselves with dry leaves only.

O King! When the two years thus passed, they got in their dreams the beautiful vision of the Goddess Bhagavatī. They were very much delighted to see in their dreams the Ambikā Devī in red robes and decorated with various ornaments. They practiced *tapasyā* in the third year with water as their only food. Thus when they found that, after practising the *tapas* for three years, they could not see the Devī face-to-face they became very anxious to see the Devī and thought thus: 'When we have not been so fortunate as to see the Devī, Who art the Bestower of peace and happiness to the human beings, we will then leave our bodies, in deep distress and sorrow!' Thus thinking, the King prepared a beautiful triangular *kuṇḍa* (pit), firm and of one hand measure. Lighting a fire in that pit, the King began to cut off slices of flesh from his own body and offered them as oblations to the fire. The Vaiśya, too, then did the same. O King! Both of them were very much excited and began to offer their blood as oblation to the Devī. The Devī Bhagavatī, then seeing them thus grieved, and that their hearts were over flowing with devotion towards Her, appeared direct before them and said thus:

31-32. 'O King! You are my favorite devotees; I am pleased with your *tapasyā;* now ask whatever you desire; I will grant you that boon.' Then She spoke to the Vaiśya: 'O Highly Fortunate One! I am pleased; ask without any delay any boon; I will grant that just now.'

33-52. Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing thus the words of the Devī, the king Suratha was very much delighted and said thus: 'O Devī! Grant me this boon that I be able today to conquer my enemies with my own power and that I may regain my kingdom.' The Devī then spoke to him thus: 'O King! Go to your own abode; your enemies are now enfeebled and will certainly be defeated. I have now withdrawn My own power from the enemies with which they were filled before. This is the result of your sacrifice. O Fortunate One! Your ministers will all come and prostrate themselves before your feet and will be obedient to you; you can now go back to your city and govern your subjects happily. O King! Thus reign for *ajuta* (10,000 years) over your widely extended dominion; then, when you quit your body, you will again be born from Sūrya, and be known widely as Sāvarni Manu.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! The pure-natured Vaiśya said with folded hands: 'O Devī! I have nothing to do with house, sons, nor wealth. O Mother! The house, wealth and sons, all these are so many sources of bondage to this world and are transitory like dreams. Therefore give me knowledge so that my ties to this world be cut asunder. Persons who are devoid of knowledge, those fools are merged in this ocean of world. The wise never prefer this *saṁsāra;* therefore they can cross this world.'

Vyāsa said: "O King! Hearing this, Mahā-māyā said to the Vaiśya that stood in front of Her thus: 'O Vaiśya! No doubt you will acquire knowledge (*jñāna*).'

Thus granting boons to them, the Devī then and there disappeared. After the Devī had disappeared, the King bowed down to the Muni, mounted his horse and expressed a desire to go back to his kingdom. Just at that time all his ministers and subjects came humbly before him, bowed down to him and standing before him with folded hands, said: 'O King! Your enemies all had acted very sinfully; hence they were all slain in battle; you be pleased now to remain in your city, free from any enemy and govern your subjects.' The King, hearing thus, bowed down to the Muni and with his permission,

started towards his kingdom, surrounded by his ministers. On regaining his own kingdom, wife, relatives and kinsmen he began to enjoy the sea-girt earth. On the other hand, the Vaiśya became illumined with the Spiritual Knowledge and all his connections and attachments being completely severed, became free from all bondages. He became liberated in his lifetime and travelled always from one place of pilgrimage to another and passed away his time in singing the glorious deeds of the Devī. O King! Thus I have described to you the most wonderful character of the Devī, what fruits were obtained by the King and the Vaiśya on their worshipping Her, how the Daityas were killed by Her, and about Her auspicious appearances on this earth. Oh! Such is the glory of the Devī, leading to fearlessness amongst Her devotees. The mortal who hears constantly this excellent pure narrative of the Devī Bhagavatī, gets truly all the best and wonderful pleasures of this world. No doubt anybody who hears this wonderful incident will obtain knowledge, liberation, fame, happiness and purity. The essence of all religions lies in this narration; therefore it leads, above all, to *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa* (religion, wealth, desire and liberation). It grants all desires to human beings."

53-54. Sūta said: "O Ṛṣis! The Maharṣi Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, versed in all the departments of knowledge, asked by the King Janamejaya, narrated to him this divine *Samhitā*. The character of Caṇḍīkā and the killing of the Daitya Śumbha were thus narrated by the merciful Muni Vedavyāsa. O Munis! I, too, have described to you the main points of this *Purāṇa*."

Here ends the Thirty-fifth Chapter of the Fifth Skandha on the receiving of the boons by the King Suratha and the Vaiśya Samādhi in the Devī Bhāgavatam, the MahāPurāṇam of eighteen thousand verses by Maharṣi Vedavyāsa. Here ends the Fifth Skandha.